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JOHN HILL, M.A.
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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THE

EXTENSION, REPEAL, AND
MORAL IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

ACT

AS A REMEDY FOR THE EXCESSIVE
AND WASTEFUL

AND IN ITS EFFECTS WITH

OTHER PARTS OF THE ACT

IN THE

REV. JOHN WILKINSON

OF THE

A NEW EDITION OF THE ACT, WITH
A FULL EXPLANATION OF THE
MORAL IMPROVEMENT

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AND

AND

Ecclesiæ Decus et Tutamen.

THE
EXTENSION, SECURITY, AND
MORAL INFLUENCE
OF THE
United Church of England and Ireland,
AUGMENTED
BY A REVISION OF ITS ECONOMY, DISCIPLINE,
AND RITUAL,
AND BY ITS ALLIANCE WITH
OTHER BRANCHES OF THE BRITISH REFORMATION
ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL AID AND CONCESSION.

BY THE
REV. JOHN RILAND, M.A.
CURATE OF YOXALL, STAFFORDSHIRE.

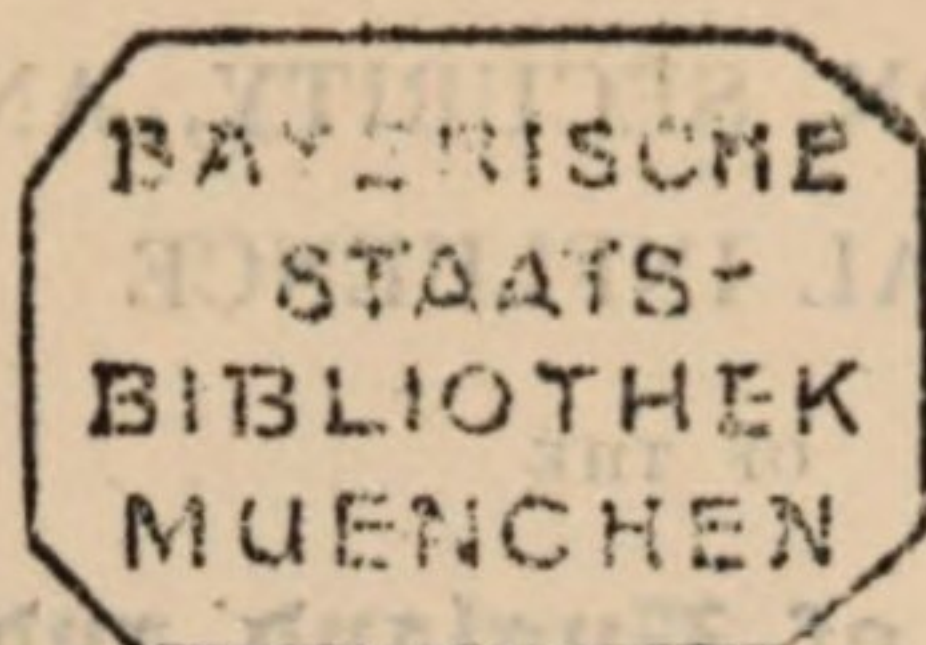
A good Patriot and true Politician always considers how he shall make the most of the existing materials of his country. A disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve, taken together, would be my standard of a Statesman.
BURKE.

LONDON :
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW ;
AND J. NISBET, BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCXXX.

Revised Edition of the

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CHURCH OF YORK, STATIONER.

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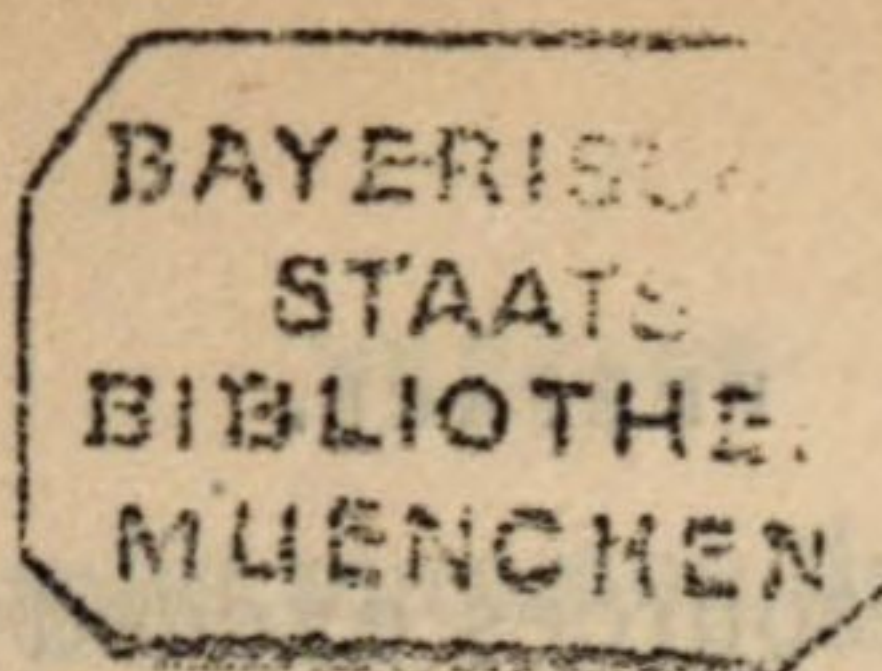
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MDCCLXX.

THERE needs no prophetical spirit to discern by a small cloud, that there is a storm coming towards our church ; such a one as shall not only drench our plumes, but shake our peace. Already do we see the sky thicken, and hear the winds whistle hollow afar off, and feel all the presages of a tempest. I see every man ready to rank himself unto a side, and to draw in the quarrel he affecteth. I see no man thrusting himself between them ; and either holding, or joining their hands in peace. This good, however thankless, office I have here boldly undertaken ; shewing how unjustly we are divided, and by what means we may be made and kept entire. Let it be no disparagement to so important a motion, that it falls from so mean a hand.

BISHOP HALL.



PREFACE.

It is necessary to apprise the reader, that the whole of the following sheets were originally written with a view to anonymous publication. This design was ultimately relinquished ; and, among other considerations, from a conviction that, in every discussion properly religious, it is most advisable to know distinctly both our allies and our opponents. It clears the field of action from certain impediments, embarrassing to either side ; while, in proportion to the open and honourable character of the war, will the credit of the prevailing party be heightened, and the shame of another's defeat be more easily borne.

In the ecclesiastical debates, recently awakened, it would appear indeed to be the favourite policy of the times to creep into the fray, only under such arrangements as may provide a secure retreat, should

the enemy's resources exceed a partisan's estimate. Of the seven pamphlets, for instance, forming the basis of the elaborate essay published under the superintendence of the Rev. Blanco White*, one only bears the name of its author; who is a layman, and therefore not exposed to such consequences as might overtake an ecclesiastic, if detected in suspicious practices.

Clergymen have, however, prefixed their addresses to various preceding and subsequent productions of the same class; and I have followed examples which, if they incur unpleasant results, are, at the same time, not open to the imputation of undue concealment. The moral courage of the combatants who have refused to join the anonymous battalion, may possibly be put to a very serious trial. They are brave enough at their writing-desks; but it might be premature to answer for their valour elsewhere. There is a hero who says, I believe, in some obsolete drama—

I left the city in a panic fright:

Lions we were in council, lambs in fight;—

* In No. I. of the London Review. Article iii.

and the couplet may one day be illustrated by a living commentary.

It has been asked, how it came to pass that the Earl of Mountcashel and other Peers first discovered the vulnerable parts of the Church at the passing of the Roman-Catholic Relief Bill—an inquiry which those noble persons are competent to answer for themselves. The present writer is able to assert, on his own part, that many years since, and when the Duke of Wellington was also triumphant in the Peninsula, he meditated a systematic and extensive investigation of his subject; but laid it aside, and might never have resumed it under any modification whatever, had he not lived to witness an evident crisis of our ecclesiastical constitution.

What now appears, is by no means the execution of his original purpose; but rather a collection of fragments, hastily gathered, irregularly disposed, and loosely cemented. I write, in fact, chiefly from a dim remembrance of past musings; except so far as my attention is more immediately absorbed by the existing indication of public opinion, which has a current of its

own, and flowing in a determinate direction. It is the business of a speculator to ascertain its ulterior progress and force.

The world around us seem to be resolved to have *some* change. Our anxious prayer should be, that it may not be for the worse. My own share in the investigation is—or ought to be—to exhibit the *religious* character of an ecclesiastical reform. Of a change strictly connected with such a character, the signs, it must be confessed, are few and ambiguous.

Let us select a very intelligible example of this,—the anxiety of a certain party to fortify itself under the authority of Mr. Burke; whose name, as might have been expected, has been copiously mingled with the points at issue. His writings are the text-book of the day; and especially with the most earnest apologists of the hierarchy.

But upon what preliminary doctrine does this statesman found his defence of the Anglican system? “We know,” he says*, “and it is our pride to know, that man is

* Reflections, Second Edition, p. 135.

by his constitution a religious animal"—and the consequence of this principle is developed in a religious establishment! The very reverse of this principle is, however, true. We know, and it is our humiliation to know, that man is by his constitution an irreligious animal; and *therefore* we would uphold and apply the remedial scheme of Christianity. "Jesus Christ," said Pascal, "came to heal the sick, and to let the healthy die;"—an aphorism exposing, at a glance, the sandy foundation selected by another builder. What would be thought of the physiologist who argued, 'We know, and it is our pride to know, that man by his constitution is a healthy animal; and therefore we frame an extensive and affluent medical establishment, with metropolitan colleges and provincial infirmaries, and with subordinate arrangements in each parish, for the cure of every form of human disease.'

I do not say but that Mr. Burke's fundamental axiom might have been capable of a more favourable interpretation, had the subsequent portions of his argument

been less inconsistent with the Gospel— if he had ultimately brought his readers round to the doctrine condensed by the aphorismic skill of Pascal ; but this is not done.

He was a defender of ecclesiastical rank and riches, without distinctly recognising either their dangers to a possessor, or their only legitimate use ; and the consequence was, that he threw round the church such a dazzling splendour as made the religion of Jesus Christ, *in this array*, acceptable to the imagination of infidelity itself. In the posthumous correspondence published by Lord Sheffield, we find the following confession from GIBBON : “ I beg leave to subscribe my assent to Mr. Burke’s creed on the Revolution in France. I admire his eloquence *and can almost excuse his reverence for church establishments.*”

We have here, then, one of the most determined and sedulous enemies of Christianity surprised into an admiration of our national religion ; and by an advocate who supplies the principal materials used by living apologists, when they echo and re-

echo what their master said about religion's *mitred front in courts and parliaments*, and the wisdom of putting ten thousand pounds a year into the possession of the Bishops of Durham and Winchester, instead of transferring such revenues to Dukes of Durham and Winchester; till these defenders would appear to persuade themselves, and their adherents, that the abuses of the darkest age of the Papal apostasy were the prime glory of the Reformation, and, indeed, of Christianity itself.

Had the great author of the *Reflections*—and great he certainly was, beyond all his mighty coevals, in the eloquence and extent of his philosophy—erected his estimate of the value of the church on its purely spiritual capabilities; who does not perceive, that Gibbon would have concentrated all the sneer, irony, and insidious compliment distributed over the *Decline and Fall*, into one effort, and hurled it against the enthusiast, who should have dared to identify the claims of an establishment with the humbling and uncompromising doctrines of the New Testament!

There are parts, it is true, in the *Reflec-*

tions, composed in a happier hour, and when the author forgot that he was supporting the character of a political churchman. He sometimes passes away from the gaudy externals of a state religion, to contemplate the native beauty of Christianity. He writes:—"To the great, the consolations of religion are as necessary as its instructions. They, too, are among the unhappy. They feel personal pain and domestic sorrow. In these they have no privilege; but are subject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality. They want this sovereign balm under their gnawing cares and anxieties; which, being less conversant about the limited wants of animal life, range without limit, and are diversified by infinite combinations in the wild and unbounded regions of imagination. Some charitable dole is wanting to these, our often very unhappy brethren, to fill the gloomy void that reigns in minds which have nothing on earth to hope or fear; something to relieve, in the killing languor and overlaboured lassitude of those who have nothing to do; something to excite an appetite

to existence in the pallid satiety which attends on all pleasures which may be bought ; where nature is not left to her own process ; where even desire is anticipated, and therefore fruition defeated, by meditated schemes and contrivances of delight ; and no interval, no obstacle, is interposed between the wish and the accomplishment."—Yet, beautiful and sublime as this passage is, it not only appears, as it were, to have found its way into Mr. Burke's estimate by accident, but describes effects which never could arise from a scheme made palatable to an unbeliever.

Paley says of the Reformers, "What they did for mankind was this ; they exonerated Christianity of a weight that sank it."—This is exactly applicable to the state of things at present ; but the persons who believe in, what they may perhaps call, the super-human inspirations of the statesman who has occasioned these remarks, are strongly tempted to load an oppressed system with heavier incumbrances. They positively defend what has been barely tolerated. They are more inclined to give up a doctrine than a sinecure.

The second only is felt to be a loss ; the first is classed among their burdens.

I cannot say that this little work is intruded upon the world with any sanguine expectation of seeing the system, so hastily and irregularly developed in *these* pages, advance with any celerity and success. We are more likely, it is to be feared, to retrograde, than to gain and fortify a stronger position. Our apologists must rise to far higher principles than those of Mr. Burke. They may indeed satisfy, where no satisfaction is wanted ; and may strengthen the predilections of ecclesiastics, to their ruin. But opponents will be encouraged, and neutrals pass over into the territory of opposition.

The vice of Mr. Burke's scheme obviously is, that *his* church is a magnificent institution which we may admire, without being practical Christians ; which we may support, while we reject religion itself ; and venerate, while we are chaffering about its preferment after a fashion which awakens the compassion of good men, and the utter contempt of a quick-sighted world. Had the church possessed nothing better than

the *Corinthian capitals* of an ecclesiastical aristocracy, its pillars would long since have fallen. To *these* were the eyes of Mr. Burke elevated, when they ought to have been stedfastly fixed upon the base,—upon the doctrinal foundation on which they rested ; and which would have been equally firm had it supported something less ornamental.

Rousseau wrote an eloquent comparison between Socrates and JESUS ; and decided in favour of the Son of Mary, whom he was constrained to prefer to the son of Sophroniscus. He painted, as he supposed, two finished portraits ; and, if he did perfect justice to Socrates, his utmost efforts in the other example were a total failure. He could not discern the features which distinguished the God and the Saviour. He, however, admired his own success, and persuaded many to admire it also.—I am very far from coupling the names of Rousseau and Burke, while I lament that any degree of analogy can exist between writers who draw up such a character of Jesus Christ, or such an estimate of the claims of a certain branch of his church, as may not

be repulsive either to the declared or secret enemies of the Son of God.

The Gospel is a religion which it is very easy to admire in fragments; but impossible to receive as a whole, except by the influences of the Spirit of holiness. It stands between the libertine and the haunts of sensuality; between the decent worldling and the temple of mammon; and warns the laborious theologian of the danger of remaining a stranger to his Redeemer, after spending his best years in defending the outworks of Christianity. It is the only religion which is essentially *personal*; and it is in this relation that a genuine Christian, in working out his salvation, feels himself disjoined from any external communion to which he may belong. He is, so far, of no specific church; but lives upon such spiritual nutriment as is common to all believers, and the exclusive property of no single communion. He feels as though the Gospel were addressed to himself, and himself only.

Mr. Burke's theory is a mass of splendour, dazzling those to whom it affords no steady light and no vivific fervour. It is a good

of no definable value—not reckoned among our personal possessions. It is a kind of public property, the advantage of which is never felt in domestic life.—*Gibbon* can almost excuse his reverence for church establishments!

I was once an enthusiastic admirer of this extraordinary orator; and, except so far as time sobers our feelings, retain the admiration of earlier life—with a second and more important exception, in reference to the present subject. We can never luxuriate in his writings, without recollecting, with a Briton's exultation, the independence of Dr. Johnson of the prejudices of schoolmasters and linguists, when he said to some person who wished to elevate Burke by suggesting that he resembled Cicero, "No, sir: Cicero resembles Edmund Burke." The value of this honest eulogy was all the greater, because the politics of the man of whom Cicero was the shadow, were, at the time, contrary to those of his immortal panegyrist.

But, oh how affecting is the consideration that patriots, who have contributed so largely to the intellectual affluence of their

country, should be themselves spiritually poor ! This reflection arises, in the present connection, solely from what is developed in Mr. Burke's *writings*. An author may be personally better or worse than his works ; and we have nothing to do with private character, further than as an individual chooses to publish his principles.

Having made this estimate—the justice of which must be determined by others—of Mr. Burke's authority in matters of religion, and regarding such authority in its powerful influences on the present defenders of our Establishment, I revert to an apprehension, already intimated, that a *religious* character does not mark the ecclesiastical discussions of the times ; and that the name of BURKE is chiefly idolized because it furnishes a plea for the retention, and even increase, of that system of worldly grandeur and affluence, of which it is at once our policy and duty to exonerate an oppressed church.

Not that I expect the least credence to be yielded to these remarks, by many of the persons most concerned in their bearings. A glance at our high-church journals

and pamphlets will quickly discover the march of clerical incredulity, and also of the unkind hostility manifested towards every one who is afraid of soothing where he ought to alarm. We *must*, however, strive to have a church which infidelity cannot be persuaded to tolerate, but be compelled to fear; and which Papists cannot recognise as a frame-work where their own system may easily be replaced, but secretly confess to be modelled after the pattern deposited in the Christian Scriptures.

We must endure to be told, that all the pomp and circumstance of religious worship, however admired by men of imagination, and substituted in the place of personal religion, is the invention not of the Reformed Church, but of the Papal Antichrist; and that in such pageantry he reigned and revelled, and deceived the nations of the earth. "One of the most striking situations," says a living philosopher, "for a religious and reflective Protestant, is that of passing some solitary hour under the lofty vault, among the superb arches and columns, of any one of

the most splendid of the ecclesiastical edifices remaining at this day in our own country. If he has sensibility and taste, the magnificence, the graceful union of so many diverse inventions of art, the whole mighty creation of genius that so many centuries since quitted the world without leaving even a name, will come with magical impression on his mind, while it is contemplatively darkening into the awe of antiquity. But he will be recalled—the sculptures, the inscriptions, the sanctuaries enclosed off for the special benefit, after death, of persons who had very different concerns during life from that of the care of their salvation, and various other insignia of the original character of the place, will help to recal him—to the thought that these proud piles were, in fact, raised to celebrate the conquest, and prolong the dominion, of the powers of darkness over the souls of the people. They were as triumphal arches, erected in memorial of the extermination of that Truth which was given to be the life of men *.”

* Foster's Essay on Popular Ignorance. 1821. 69, 70.

Yet is there not the least occasion to convert these magnificent edifices into ruin. They, and the revenues which support them, are among the *existing materials of our country*; and it is our wisdom to apply them to the highest purposes. The motto on my title is meant to be the essence of all that follows; and if I have endeavoured to expose the perilous system of Mr. Burke, as it affects the spiritual character and perpetuity of the Church, I have selected one of his golden sentences as affording the genuine principle of ecclesiastical reform. Let us *make the most* of our possessions, and we shall be safe; as far as our security depends upon human discretion and foresight. If we continue—I will not say to make the least of them, but to use them improvidently, and to secularize what in itself is spiritual—we may haply tempt God to leave us to the consequences of our own wilfulness and pride.

Jesus Christ never came into this world that he might inebriate his ministers with the world's wealth and honour, and cause them to languish for the very things of which they professionally warn others to

beware. *This* was the plot of another—of one who persuaded a member of the Apostolic college itself to sell his Master; whose treachery was perhaps permitted, at the outset of the Gospel, in order to shew mankind that the very highest ecclesiastical dignity, ever conferred upon a descendant of Adam, could not protect the church against the intrusion of a traitor.

Yoxall, March 26, 1830.

+ * * * *Although, in the succeeding papers, the anonymous form has been retained, the writer wishes to be understood as having rather repressed, than disclosed, his entire opinions. Had the essay, however, been primarily drawn up with an intention to prefix the name of the author, it might have been expedient to have refrained from any personal allusions affecting himself. They are now left to the reader's examination of their due bearing upon the subjects with which they are connected. If the points themselves are illustrated by such connection, the writer ought not to regret that he has mingled some share of private feeling and history with a public discussion.*

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INTRODUCTION.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

CHARLES JAMES BLOMFIELD, D. D.,

BISHOP OF LONDON.

February 6, 1830.

MY LORD,

AFTER a long period of indecision, as to the expediency of submitting an attempt of this kind to public examination, the experiment is now made; and, it is confessed, with the apprehension of results not flattering to my personal feelings, nor to an author's natural ambition to conciliate and convince his patrons.

The writer expects, among a few less unwelcome consequences, the disapprobation of many from whom he considers it to be embarrassing, if not contemptuous, to differ; while he is still persuaded that *such* opponents will unite with him on general principles; however they may question, or, in some instances, scarcely refrain from resenting, their present application.

It is, my Lord, I trust, no violation of the courtesies of literature or of ecclesiastical etiquette, neither of the consideration due to a Prelate of your Lordship's station and character, to affix to these essays the address of the Bishop of London. Should my effort be abortive, it is yet impossible that his name should receive any blemish from its compulsory connection with the failure of an anonymous adventurer; and if the attempt be attended, in your Lordship's judgment, with any measure of success, I shall, at least, have the satisfaction of, so far, discovering a coincidence of opinion in a high and influential quarter.

"Some literary enterprizes," said a patriot of the last age, "are indeed rather hazardous in their nature. Mine are of that number. Yet I love decorum, and I would be guided by discretion: but it is not the form only of those virtues, refined through certain strainers, that I would preserve; it is the spirit. I would have gentleness without

timidity; and decision without presumption. But I *must* feel the pressing nature of the time; the burdens, the terrors, the perils, and the necessity of the state. Whoever would do a public service, must forget himself; his remuneration is from within*.”

I do not, my Lord, cite this as though I affected a similar disinterestedness, transparency of intent, and self-abnegation; but, as intimating what *ought* to characterize and guide any one who ventures into the chair of counsel, admonition, or censure. An estimate of my own motives, I leave to be made by such as allow to this volume an adequate share of the attention due to its professed object.

In the mean time, permit me to remark, generally, that it is part of our unhappiness, in this imperfect state, to mistake each other on subjects where we essentially agree, and where a little timely explanation might often prevent disunion and estrangement. Our temptation, further, is, to contend about human modifications of religion, till we practically deny the value of our common object, the inestimable Gospel itself; by refusing to yield to its pacific influences, and forgetting one criterion of sincerity, as established in the

* Pursuits of Literature, 1797.

earliest age of Christianity,—“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”

I am perfectly aware, my Lord, that against every scheme bearing upon the investigation of the economy and ritual of any church whatever, we must calculate upon the apparition of every form of surprise, irritability, derision, disgust, and recriminatory emotion, which our abject nature can assume. Seldom do men feel themselves so deeply insulted, as when they are examined and cross-questioned about their religious systems. On such occasions, the most accomplished professor of theological science, and the illiterate itinerant who cannot spell his own licence, equally betray their frail original; and, in the same tone of authority, do they warn off their respective premises every intruder who assumes an air of independence and scrutiny.

It would seduce me into an inquiry foreign to my immediate purpose, to offer to your Lordship a solution of so strange an anomaly. But whatever this might be, it is an useful act of self-discipline to ask with what degree of certainty we know our opinions—and some of our favourite ones—to be our genuine and actual property; to distinguish between such sentiments as we have received, and continue to hold, on terms of secular advantage,

and such as we have searched out, and now value, purely on account of their abstract excellence.

What, for example, is a *nominal* Protestant's preference for his own church? In the instance of the Dignitary of an Establishment, it is purchased at a known price. In the example of an unbeneficed Clergyman, it is also purchased—not by preferment, which he does not possess, but by the hope of obtaining it. In the case of the Dissenting Minister, it is neither a benefice in possession nor reversion; but it resides in a source of attachment of, sometimes, superior efficiency to those already adduced,—the identification of his intellectual credit, personal feelings, and social habits, with the cause of Dissent. A plea of precisely the same nature might be advanced in connection with the first and the second of the preceding illustrations; and, in those examples, be regarded as a very powerful super-addition to such influences as cannot be brought to bear upon the passions of a separatist, since the bribe is beyond his grasp.

In this view of the general venality of mankind, I am only repeating, my Lord, the world's accusation against itself; and this confessor of its own selfishness, and vulgarity of aim, makes no sort of exception in favour of its friends, merely because

certain among them walk in the robes of an Establishment, and others in the bareness of Non-conformity. We are speaking, exclusively, of men, of whatever communion, whose zeal for the externals of religion—for they care for nothing beyond these—is commercial; and who buy and sell and get gain within the precincts of the temple; disposing of themselves for money or fame, as avarice, or a more universal passion, may prescribe the conditions of the contract.

The reflections arising from the sight of this profane traffic, urge upon us the necessity of viewing the affairs of our own church under as pure and unworldly an aspect as we possibly can. Whatever may be the political importance of an ecclesiastical establishment, *we*, my Lord, are constrained to measure its value by its ability, as an instrument at the Divine disposal, to ensure to its members everlasting happiness. On this principle only, and to the exclusion of all inferior pretensions, can its claims be satisfactorily asserted, and especially when brought into collision with other forms of Christianity existing under the same civil government.

It is, consequently, a fair demand upon its supporters, that they should be able to prove their salvation to be more secure beneath its shelter, than it would be if such protection were relin-

quished in favour of a rival communion. And if, on the other hand, it can be substantiated, that the spiritual influences of an Establishment, and of any specified scheme of Dissent, are perfectly equal, the Establishment ought unquestionably to be allowed the advantage, by the re-union of the separated party with the national church.

I do not, my Lord, advance such positions on the supposition that these conflicting claims *could* be adjusted with the nicety implied in my theory; but simply to illustrate the necessity of combining such inquiries, as much as possible, with the spiritualities of the religion of Jesus Christ. In defending, therefore, our own Establishment, our arguments, in the main, should be purely religious, or none at all: otherwise, we shall be justly suspected of maintaining it on principles which would be equally valid if applied to a question of merely human interest; and then our attachment to the Church would confess itself to be nothing better than one of the many varieties of self-love. If, indeed, any alliance between church and state could be concluded on such terms as that the Gospel should be allowed to pursue its course, without being liable to be deranged and obstructed by the irregular movements of its associate; in that case, the most cautious and sensitive religionist might, consistently, be-

come a party to the confederacy. The cause of his jealousy would be removed, by depriving the world of its powers of offence.

But on the subjects to be examined in the sequel, we are forbidden, my Lord, to theorize. We are sternly required, by the exigencies of the times, to investigate what actually exists, and with a view to the security and renovation of our system.—I address myself, under your Lordship's shadow, to men who unreservedly confess the abstract truth of what is above offered to their consideration, while they may hesitate about the extent of its uses. Inquiries of this kind are obviously questions of degrees and of fact; and it is this circumstance which affords the most satisfactory revelation of the mystery, why individuals of equal piety, talent, and learning should be found in different divisions of the universal church. Leighton and Hall are Episcopalians—Howe and Edwards Independents. Beveridge pleads for a liturgy—Doddridge for unpremeditated prayer. Milner gives an elaborate chapter in defence of a hierarchy—Gill takes up a position on the opposite eminence.

Yet these several divines were unconscious of the mildest feelings of hostility towards each other, the moment they entered their respective stations of pastoral instruction, in order to teach mankind

the way to eternal life. On subjects of minor importance they separated ; but there was dissent without dissension—a difference, not in doctrine and spirit, but in circumstantials.

If the successors of Howe and Owen, among ourselves, could demonstrate that a church not governed by bishops, neither using liturgical worship, were most favourable, both in principle and actual success, to the salvation of its members ; it would then be time to fashion the national establishment entirely after such a model, since the question which now shatters the Christianity of our country into fragments would be finally set at rest.

But, my Lord, I am again wandering into hypothesis ; while the darkening reality is, that most of us are too fondly devoted to our several modes of polity, even to listen with decorous patience—or, rather, without a monkish determination never to yield—to any project not originating with our own leaders ; that is, with persons whom we have previously engaged to consult the prejudices of their followers.

If it be possible to obtain an unbiassed judgment of the merits of any given church, we must look out for some newly-arrived stranger from an unknown country ; mature in all spiritual judgment ; unconnected with our numberless forms of

native prepossession ; inaccessible to such seductions of flattery as would be elaborated by the partisans pressing around him, to engage his vote and interest in favour of their respective communions : in short, a seraph, and not a man : and we must implore *him* to decide upon our conflicting pretensions.

As we have arrived, however, in spite of the practical demands of this inquiry, at another hypothesis, we will imagine what emotions would arise, when this celestial visitant surveyed the universal church, in the confusions and distractions of the days passing over us ; and apply to him what Milton says of a less beatified spirit, when about to address millions of an eager audience :

He now prepared
To speak ; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers : attention held them mute.
Thrice he essay'd, and thrice—
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth.

The difference would be in the *cause* of such emotion. The tears would flow from a source, not of mortified ambition and rebellious pride, but of compassion ; and when *words, interwoven with sighs*, found their way, the pure and unfallen seraph would address the listening hosts in terms of commiseration and of fearful reproof.

In a system, my Lord, so complicated as our own, so closely worked into the texture of the state, all that we can safely do must partake rather of a purifying process than of direct innovation. Time itself alters all things, except the everlasting Gospel; and it is our interest to watch the influence of change, and to mark well whether it affects favourably or otherwise our own scheme of Divine revelation.

It is the opinion of many, that the Anglican Reformation came to an untimely pause before it was cleansed from all the pollutions of the Papacy. With another party it is matter of triumph that the church has retained so large a portion of wealth and secular splendor, as, in this respect, to have luxuriated far beyond every other branch of the Protestant community throughout the world. A similar class of adherents mourn over the spoliations committed by Henry VIII. and Elizabeth; and they utter their lamentations in a tone which indicates, that the primary riches of a church are, in their view, silver and gold, and its secondary a certain measure of truth and moral excellence.

In the midst of these various speculations, one point appears to be certain,—public opinion is bearing itself sternly towards any part of our polity which stands upon no firmer basis than

the usages of the earlier centuries, and the decisions of a body interested in its own popularity. The unquestionable position of Lord Bacon, that antiquity formed the infancy of the world, is eagerly recognised by many of the ancients born within the last five-and-twenty years; and they betray no signs of a fastidious delicacy in availing themselves of their privileges.

But, my Lord, before we determine upon the demolition of an hereditary mansion, in order to erect in its place a building of greater pretensions to modern taste and luxury, it may be well to inquire, whether it would not better consist with economy, and with a kindly and defensible attachment to domestic prejudices, to take an architect's advice, as to the possibility of accommodating the old structure to its owner's real convenience and enjoyment by a general reparation; and whether it might not be, further, advisable to pull down its superfluous parts and deformities, as well as to make such additions as would contribute to the family's comfort, while they adorned and strengthened the original edifice. One of the most impressive of all objects is an antique abbey or castle, reared in feudal times; covered with lichens and ivy; decorated, internally, with tapestry, heraldic devices, armouries, and galleries of historic portraits mellowed by the touch of

time ; yet possessing all the useful magnificence of the present age ; the whole being, also, in *keeping*, and exhibiting the taste of a proprietor who combines a veneration for his ancestors with a sober attention to the comforts and dignities of their posterity.

It is, however, far easier to dress up a metaphor, or to take a tour to Warwick, Arundel, and Windsor, than to gather from the arts of illustration the wisdom adequate to the reform of a church without compromising its safety. That this *might* be done, I have not the least doubt ; provided, my Lord—and the provision will be allowed to be very ample—there were the same unity of purpose and dignity of feeling found in the parties, necessary to legislate for the prosperity of the church, as may be discovered in the renovation and embellishment of a baronial residence, where a nobleman, equal to the difficulties of the experiment, superintends its alterations and interior arrangements.

It may, however, be part of our probation here below, to pursue with cheerfulness, and with a grateful recollection of the Divine promises, the perplexed path of duty, by making the best use of imperfect means, and by endeavouring to fill up the deficiencies of a scheme in the processes of execution ; while we forbid our imaginations, even

when regulated by the severity of principle, to wander from the demands of the moment into aspirations after good which may never come, or, when arrived, disappoint the speculator by its inefficiency. "I am further than ever I was," said the veteran Baxter, "from expecting great matters of unity, splendor, or prosperity, in the church on earth; or that saints should dream of a kingdom of this world, or flatter themselves with the hopes of a golden age, or reigning over the ungodly, till there be *a new heaven, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness* and though God would have vicissitudes of summer and winter, day and night, that the church may grow extensively in the summer of prosperity, and intensively and radically in the winter of adversity; yet usually their night is longer than their day, and that day itself hath its storms and tempests*." Self-experience teaches much the same lesson to all who are willing to learn it.

So many airy draughts and lines,
And warm excursions of the mind,
Have fill'd *my* soul with great designs,
While practice grovell'd far behind:
Oh what is thought! and where withdraw
The glories which my fancy saw †!

* Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Biography, V. 582.

† "The Mystery of Life," by the Rev. John Gambold.

Despondency may then usurp the place of hope, and reduce its victim to a state of listless inactivity, and to practical acquiescence in all existing evil. Bad men will also avail themselves of such a result ; pursue their old courses with impunity ; and prevent every effort towards reformation.

There were not wanting, my Lord, in the sixteenth century, many Saxon ecclesiastics who told Luther that he had much better attend to the duties of his monastery, sing the hours, and tell the rosary, than speculate upon healing the inmates of that great house of incurables—the world. They repeated the great rule, *Tria faciunt bonum monachum ; bene loqui de superiore, legere breviarium taliter qualiter, et sinere res vadere ut vadunt*. This abridgment of monastic law is still in great request with many who shiver at the very name of a monk ; and it would well serve their purpose, if the busy and jealous politicians of the day would let religious institutions alone. But they have laid seige to us, and the battering train is on its march to our fortress ; while we know not what mines may be suddenly sprung under the very citadel itself.

And here, my Lord, allow me to remark, in reference to my own connection with my subject, that, although it may not be generally advisable to mingle any portion of an author's personal

history with the stream of his discussions, his representations may yet derive an accession of strength from such a mode of illustration, and also impart to his statements something of the interest and importance of reality.

I was born and nurtured within the pale of the Church of England ; and have been nearly thirty years one of its ministers. My ancestral claims and early prepossessions—the former of almost two centuries in duration—were all in its favour ; and were afterwards riveted by the course of thinking inculcated at Oxford, at that period of life when the mind is most ardent, and most susceptible of the impressions retained to future days and usually influencing our characters to the last.

In this state I left the University ; and, having read Leslie, Jones, Law, Hooker, and other writers of their school, became easily satisfied with the results of their reasonings on episcopacy and its collateral subjects. I was, in fact, a high-churchman in point of polity ; and, as to the doctrines of the Church, not one of them, as far as I now recollect, became matter of perplexing doubt. But though I had no hesitation, for example, about the Athanasian Creed, I have to this hour a confused remembrance of the self-gratulation derived from once hearing an associate read Horbery's defence of it ; not, of course, because I

wanted conviction myself, but from a sensation of its being a sedative applicable in every correspondent case of controversial irritability.

But, my Lord, during this season of acquiescence in our established creed and regimen, I was a mere novice, reposing implicitly on the ready-made decisions of my own party. Neither was this the worst. My life, like that of the majority around me, was uninfluenced by Christianity itself; being, for the most part, wasted among the frivolities of the world—the lighter shades, alas! of a character darkened by more positive offences—and to the entire forgetfulness of parental instruction and example. There are, I am aware, degrees of deviation from the right path. It would be fruitless, perhaps, to endeavour to ascertain the measures of my own. Whatever they were, let me ask, what is an irreligious life but practical infidelity? I do not know, at this distance of time, what satisfactory answer I could have given to any man who had asked me the question,—In what respects would your conduct have been essentially different, if Jesus Christ had never come into this world?

I pause at this lamentable fact, as illustrating one of the most insidious deceptions of the human mind. We have here a young man felicitating himself on the possession of sound ecclesiastical

principles, yet living in oblivion of the Gospel ; who could boast of quartering the cross in his shield, while he bore arms against the Captain of his salvation !

I extort, my Lord, these confessions from myself, with the hope, also, of persuading some Clerical Reader of this address to examine how far his own case resembles mine. The prosperity of our church is most seriously interested in such investigations ; and the man who deliberately shrinks from an analysis of his own character in this relation, may be pronounced to be an enemy of our communion, and of himself.

Some time previously to my ordination, and when it pleased God, as I trust, to withdraw my attention from the shadows of religion--by which I mean, in this place, the human vehicles of Christianity, as distinct from the treasures of which they are the fragile depository—I began to waver as to the comparative importance of any thing else than the salvation of souls ; and I was also conscious, that many persons of all communions (except Socinians) were regarded by religious characters as members of that mystical church which is called, in our ritual, the “blessed company of all faithful people.”

In subsequent years I gained some acquaintance with the controversial writings of the Non-

conformists ; and occasionally felt as much unable to answer their anti-episcopal statements, as I had before been satisfied by arguments on the other side. I became, indeed, more familiar with this kind of reading than is generally, I believe, the case with men who profess to value spiritual theology. It ultimately seduced me to venture into the gloomy labyrinths of the non-juror Collier, and of his compeers Heylin and Laud ; and I must confess to your Lordship, that these writers contributed far more powerfully than their opponents to convince me of the anti-christian tendencies of their system.

The scheme recoiled upon itself, and became its own destruction. The church, in their hands, was like the eagle pierced by an arrow feathered from its own wing ; or—to adapt against themselves a metaphor of their own construction, and originally designed to rankle in the bosom of moderate and peaceable members of the church—like an oak cleft in shivers by wedges made out of its own body. In my case, they accomplished a strange triumph, by compelling me to retreat towards the enemy's country for safety and resources, such as I could not find in our own camp.

Casuists of this class might indeed have framed loop-holes, through which they would struggle to

escape, if accused of being allies of the Papacy abroad, or of civil and ecclesiastical despotism at home; or if laden with the heavier charge of being secretly jealous of the religion of the New Testament, except so far as it might be perverted to the augmentation of the power and affluence of the clergy: but to myself it was then evident, and continues to be so whenever I look for a moment into their writings, that *their* system of Christianity must be something which its disciples may embrace without deriving thence holiness in this life, and without ensuring security and happiness in eternity.

Was it the narrow way which "leadeth unto life," or the broad one which "leadeth to destruction," which the historian Collier trod himself, and whither he beckoned his followers, when, in the retirement of his study, and immersed in contemplations bearing, in his own view, upon the dearest interests of religion, he constructed the following period? He writes,—“As to the parallel between this princess (Elizabeth) and her sister queen Mary; may it not be affirmed, that the one made martyrs in the church, and the other beggars; the one executed the men, the other the estates? And therefore, reserving the honour of the Reformation to Queen Elizabeth, the question will be, whether the resuming the first-fruits and tenths,

putting many of the vicarages in this deplorable situation, and settling a perpetuity of poverty upon the church, was not much more prejudicial than fire and faggot: whether destroying bishoprics is not a much greater hardship than destroying bishops?—because this severity affects succession, and reaches down to future ages. And, lastly, whether, as the world goes, it is not more easy to recruit bishops, than the revenues to support them?”

Did the same writer really believe that “we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done,” when he characterized a veteran voluptuary, and an open despiser of God, in terms such as these: “It must be granted, his pleasures were too strong for him. These sallies proved unserviceable to his exchequer, and drove him upon inequalities in his administration*”—so that a notoriously wicked life was only injurious because of the expenses necessary to sustain it!

Libertines of this kind—I do not mean, my Lord, Charles the Second, but Collier himself—may have driven me towards another extreme; and compelled me to be more jealous of the de-

* Collier's Ecclesiastical History, II. 670, 904.

fenders of ecclesiastical privilege than may be quite consistent with the obligations of a clergyman. I am, however, certain of this, that if any thing is at this crisis more offensive to the public mind than another, it is the exhibition of high and haughty claims on the part of a hierarchy, and of unqualified eulogiums on the theory and administration of establishments.

Our movements, at the present moment, must be strictly defensive. A different policy will increase the suspicions, and firmness of purpose, already discernible in hostile quarters. With prudence, simplicity, and meekness of wisdom, we may yet be saved. By aggression and obstinacy we shall urge our Mother to suicide. And what, in that case, will be the result? Whatever might be individual loss to dignitaries, or to any other members or officers of the church, all would be forgotten in consequences convulsionary to society. No Dissenter of reflection would wish for such an issue; neither could he presume upon the assurance that his own party could supply the place of the fallen church. I speak, my Lord, of *religious* Dissenters, and therefore sons of peace; able, with their pious brethren in the Establishment, to distinguish between the symmetry and the deformities of any community, not excepting their own: men who do not entirely forget the

claims of a national church, in discerning its remediable evils ; and who unite with its devout members in praying for the effusion of the Holy Ghost over *all* congregations where the substance of the everlasting Gospel may yet be found.

An individual like myself, retired, and remote from the head-quarters of information, cannot prescribe the direct remedy, and the safest vehicle of its administration, for the distemperature of the time. It is easy, indeed, to watch the ravages of disease, and not very difficult to understand what should be the *nature* of the cure. On the other hand, it is frequently the infelicity of ecclesiastics in the high stations of the church to be unconscious of the direction, and also force, of popular sentiment ; so that they sometimes see no danger, or form inadequate estimates of its powers of injury. The difference between your Lordship and the person who now discloses his own fears, may be, that I see evils which I cannot alter, and may possibly exasperate by suggesting unwise means of removal ; while an active and influential Prelate might furnish the application of a remedy, could he once distinctly discern the existence and malignity of the distemper.

It has been observed with regard to ministers of state—and the remark may be still more applicable to ecclesiastical dignitaries—that “ the per-

sons whom the King appoints to assist him in the various departments of his office, by having their whole attention engrossed by mechanical details and minutiae, lose, from the moment of their appointment, all knowledge of what is taking place throughout the country ; so that it was an observation of Lord Chatham, that a minister on leaving office is, in degree of acquaintance with the then situation of the country, only where he was when he went into it."

In one relation, I ought to be the last man who should be disheartened by the present appearances of the ecclesiastical world ; as it has been my privilege to number among my intimates and companions in social life some of the most exemplary clergymen of the day. In *their* character and pastoral fidelity, and in ministers of similar pretensions—of whom the number is by no means small—resides the strength of the Church of England. They do its work ; whether paid its wages, or suffered to starve.

If I have any unmeet prejudices against the Establishment, they die away in the society of such men. If I indulge in gloomy fears about the increase of mere sectarian Dissent, they retire from within the same circle. If I look at the gathering of the Papal hordes, and at the junction of their force with the practical atheists of Reformed

churches, my hope of seeing the confederacy repelled rests upon the party I have described.

I am, also, fully conscious of the mistakes, wilfully or ignorantly made, with regard to these very guardians of *all* our national blessings! They are frequently singled out as enemies—a few years will prove the justice or the cruelty of this accusation. I do not, my Lord, refer to what may be developed in this lower world, by the course of public events; but to the hour when all must appear before the tribunal of God. “Oh the necessity,” as Fuller says, “of the general day of judgment, wherein all men’s actions shall be expounded according to their intentions; which here are interpretable, according to other men’s inclinations! *”

We certainly have not to do with motives, but with overt acts. This is the common and only defensible course of human policy; and it applies properly to the concerns of religion. Where opposition to good men is visible——But your Lordship anticipates the inference. In *this* view of passing events, I am quite disheartened. In the *mercenaries* of the church, he must be blind indeed who does not see its speedy and irretrievable ruin, unless averted by one of those dispensations of Pro-

* Church History, book XI. 148.

vidence, by which bad men are sometimes protected against themselves. I will not, my Lord, disguise my fears, that, if any alteration is to take place in our ritual and economy, our most serious peril will develop itself in the endeavours of a certain party so to complete the new arrangements, as that the Church shall receive no accession of spirituality in doctrine, nor of severity in discipline; but, on the contrary, be degraded to a lower point in both, by way of suiting the whole system to a worldly standard; and, further, by compelling the really conscientious portion of the clergy to retire from their stations, and leave behind them a larger share of honour and spoil for the guilty enjoyment of others.

Should this be the case, we shall have, in a few years, a new Act of Uniformity and a second list of ejected ministers. But the evil will not stop there. The Establishment, deprived of its foundations, will either fall at once, or it will rise higher than ever—not, indeed, soaring towards heaven, but taking its upward flight towards “spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Will your Lordship excuse my earnestness, if, under the excitement of such apprehensions—however hope may whisper to the contrary, and bid the soul luxuriate in brighter prospects—I take the liberty of urging yourself, and your as-

sessors on the episcopal bench, to intermit no watch, in the hour of trial, against your own and the nation's worst enemies—even such ecclesiastics as are eager enough to commence innovation and revision under the mask of reform, provided they can render a religious establishment subservient to ambition and avarice, and furnish it with the means of excluding those ministers who would be its light and glory!

In the arrangements, indeed, of legislation, ample room is afforded for the intrusion and machinations of all forms of evil. “The very region of politics is baneful; it is too frequently ‘the soil the *vices* like.’ Every statesman, in or out of power, knows his own meanness, the turbulence of his passions, the rattles of office, the irritation of opponents, the jealousy of rank, and the impatience of consorted power*.”

As admission into the clerical order makes no alteration in the physical or moral structure of man, we are necessitated to calculate upon the transfer of all the confusion, described by my author, from the cabinet to the convocation. In either place we meet our fellows in the shivering nakedness of our original. The house of Pilate and the palace of the High Priest alike stood in

* Pursuits of Literature, 423. Tenth Edition.

the holy city, and were inhabited by much the same kind of characters; although one was a heathen, and the other the primate of the ancient church.

What, my Lord, is the inference from such recollections, but a warning, that, when we have to negotiate with our brethren—using that term in its widest sense—and with ourselves, on matters so unspeakably important as the regulations of a national church, it is all but impossible to be too cautious as to the result of our counsels.

The rule of safety is, doubtless, as already and subsequently intimated, to examine the subject as a *religious* one. If this be faithfully obeyed, we shall feel ourselves surrounded by *SOULS* in their way to eternity; and in one inquiry will be merged all other considerations—namely, what can we best do for their salvation? When this point is gained, our work is either completed, or we may finish what remains with little anxiety for the result.

In what is offered to public notice in the succeeding sheets, I have endeavoured to abide by the principle thus developed. If your Lordship should judge any portions of the general design to be over-stated, I trust that the excess may be imputed to any cause except wilful and wanton exaggeration. Should other portions be under-

stated, I can find no apology for the defect, but the irregularity of action incident to the human mind, during its connection with a subtle and difficult investigation.

But, before I close these introductory remarks, there are two points to which I solicit or recal your Lordship's very serious attention.—If the Bishops of the United Church enter upon the expected reforms with a resolution to complete them upon purely Christian principles, and if such determination exhibit itself consistently from the beginning to the end of their counsels, it will be well for the bench to prepare itself for every open insult, and for every secret treachery. The mitre will not be the least protection to its wearer; but rather shew a broader mark for the missiles of an enemy. It will be as the lantern hung near the vitals of the Duc D'Enghien, in the night when he fell in the castle fosse of Vincennes.

If proof were needed of such a prospective consequence, we have only to look back to what occurred during the progress and consummation of the Catholic Relief Bill; when the most devoted idolists of episcopacy seemed ambitious to excel each other in execrating prelates not of their own party. And this they did *personally*. The insult was directed, not against what was *said* by certain of your Lordship's brethren, in their places, in the

House of Lords; but it was evidently and avowedly an attack upon private character. It was not an examination of the speakers, but an undisguised hatred of the men. It reminded lookers-on of what was said on a not dissimilar occasion—it was “rather the violent explosion of long-condensed hate, than the steady flow of avowed opposition.”

Let those who remember the vituperations of the infidel and Sunday press, and of the anti-catholic periodicals and pamphlets, decide upon the accuracy of my assertions. Let those who were too serious, on that occasion, to be merely amused by the outbreaks of practical atheism—I know, my Lord, what I am saying—and who were aware of what was passing behind the scenes, inform us what we are to expect from such partisans, in the day when there will be a conflict between the faithful followers of Jesus Christ and the “rulers of the darkness of this world.”

I am not delivering the sentiments only of the present writer, but of many watchers of the signs of the times, when I add, that numbers, among the most eager sticklers for the Divine right and secular privileges of the Episcopacy, will never advance—no, not an inch—at the bidding of the entire bench, beyond their own calculations of self-interest, and a determination to allow Chris-

tianity no further influence than within the circle of profession and ceremony.

In a day of persecution, the world may, perhaps, be surprised to discover who will kindle the fires of martyrdom, and who will be selected for the sacrifice. The eagles of the Protestant, as well as of the Papal Antichrist, will always fly at the highest quarry.

The other point which I offer to your Lordship's attention (and to which I may recur towards the close of these papers), is the necessity of maintaining, in strict combination, public questions of a religious character with our own personal and eternal fears and hopes.

The proceedings of civil legislation, in many instances, scarcely affect the legislator himself; and sometimes cannot touch him at all. But in the regulations of the church, especially when bearing upon doctrine, the Primate of the greatest empire is as much implicated as the lowest officer of his metropolitan cathedral, or as the pauper who is nourished by his bounty. From a neglect of legislating on this principle, ecclesiastical documents have often borne the appearance of acts passed for the sole use of a lower class of the community; and as though their superiors needed no such protections from error, neither impulses to good of equal efficiency.

But the Gospel is all the more beneficial in its consequences, when its preachers implicate themselves in every appeal addressed to their audience. We then win our way to the conscience of another, when our doctrine is the result of self-knowledge ; and when the people are reproved or encouraged in the language of humiliation and sympathy.

As an illustration of this, I transcribe what was written, in 1775, by an eminent clergyman, who closed his most useful ministry in your Lordship's own diocese. The citation is, on all accounts, surprisingly applicable to the present state of this country ; and is, therefore, longer than would have been apposite to my immediate purpose, had it been merely adduced as an example of the force of truth ; when a Christian advocate escapes from abstract reasoning, and employs the eloquence of sympathy and practical experience.—“ Wherever we cast our eyes, the bulk of the people are ignorant, immoral, careless. They live without God in the world ; they are neither awed by his authority, nor affected by his goodness, nor enabled to trust to his promises, nor disposed to aim at his glory. If, perhaps, they have a serious interval, or some comparative sobriety of character, they ground their hopes upon their own doings, endeavours, or purposes ; and treat the inexpressible love of God revealed in Christ, and the Gospel

method of salvation by faith in his name, with neglect, often with contempt. They have preachers whom, perhaps, they hear with some pleasure, because they neither alarm their consciences by insisting on the spirituality and sanction of the Divine law, nor offend their pride by publishing the humiliating doctrines of that Gospel, which is the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. Therefore, what they do speak, they speak in vain: the world grows worse and worse under their instructions; infidelity and profligacy abound more and more: for God will own no other doctrine but what the Apostle calls 'the truth as it is in Jesus;' that doctrine which drives the sinner from all his vain pleas, and points out the Lord Jesus Christ as the only ground of hope, the supreme object of desire; as appointed of God to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, to all who believe in his name. When ministers themselves are convinced of sin, and feel the necessity of an almighty Saviour, they presently account their former gain but loss, and determine, with the Apostle, to 'know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' In proportion as they do this, they are sure to be wondered at, and railed at; if the providence of God, and the constitution of their country, secure them from severer treatment. But they have this invaluable compensation, that they

no longer speak without effect. In a greater or less degree a change takes place in their auditories: the blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed; sinners are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; sinful practices are forsaken: and a new course of life in the converts evidences that they have not followed cunningly devised fables, nor taken up with uncertain notions; but that God has indeed quickened them by his Spirit, and given them an understanding to know Him that is true. The preachers, likewise, while they attempt to teach others, are taught themselves; a blessing descends upon their studies and labours, upon their perusal of the Scripture, upon their attention to what passes within them and around them: the events of every day contribute to throw light upon the word of God; their views of Divine truth grow more enlarged, connected, and comprehensive; many difficulties, which perplexed them at their first setting out, trouble them no more; the God whom they serve, and on whom they wait, reveals to them those great things which, though plainly expressed in the letter of the Scripture, cannot be understood and realized without Divine teaching (1 Cor. ii. 9—15). Thus they go on from strength to strength; hard things become easy, and a Divine light shines upon their paths. Opposition from

men perhaps may increase: they may expect to be represented as 'those who turn the world upside down;' the cry, *Great is Diana*, &c., will be raised against them; the gates of the temple of preferment will be seldom open to them; but they will have the unspeakable consolation of applying to themselves those lively words of the Apostle,—*as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things**."

In such a career of affectionate eloquence did this writer persevere, till he succeeded, with the aid of concurrent causes, in turning away his correspondent from the dark heresies of Socinianism to the light of the Gospel; and results, so auspicious to the church, as were the ministry and writings of the late Rev. Thomas Scott, were his friend's rich reward. A similar course of persuasive instruction will never be barren of the like consequences.

There is, indeed, such identity in revealed truth, as well as in the construction of all human minds, that the self-same doctrine is equally effectual, by the effusion of the Spirit of holiness, in every rank of society, and under every advantage or disadvantage of education. The philosopher and the

* Works of the Rev. John Newton. 1824. i. 560.

divine—for theological skill, so far from having the least necessary connection with religion, is frequently a dire impediment to its possessor's salvation—are on a level with the unlearned; for “where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? For when the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

Your Lordship will excuse, I trust, the repetition of these familiar suggestions. As occurring in a public address, they are, of course, offered to the consideration of many, to whom, if they are really novel, they ought to bear an aspect of very serious importance.

Had I been persuaded that the Bishop of London dissented from the general principle on which they are founded, I should have refrained from so directly soliciting his attention to my entire effort; the design of which, at this crisis of the United Church, may perhaps in some degree conceal the rudeness of its execution.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's very obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I.

THE NOMINALISTS AND REALISTS OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH—THE UNION OF THE LATTER AUSPICIOUS TO THE NATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT.

In my own judgment, after, I hope, much serious and impartial consideration, I am a moderate Episcopalian and a Pædobaptist; but am entirely willing my brethren should be, some Presbyterians, and some Independents, and not extremely unwilling that some should be Baptists; rejoicing that Christ is preached, and the essentials of true religion upheld, among persons of different sentiments; and only grieved that each one will be what he is *jure divino*, and judge and condemn others. I would only beseech all to leave biting and devouring each other, and to unite together, as so many regiments in one army, against the common enemy.—SCOTT.

THE members of our Establishment, like those of the church universal, may be divided into the two classes of nominalists and realists; the former, in either case, constituting a vast majority. The increase of the latter is the only sort of extension which can strengthen our cause. The aid will then be properly spiritual, and therefore efficient.

But in this kind of augmentation must be included, not merely the addition made to our numerical force by such religious persons as are now separated from us ; but the conversion of unsound churchmen into genuine disciples. There will be created, by this double operation, an accession of power from two divisions of people ; one of them being, at present, our internal enemy, and consequently our most pernicious one ; while the other party can be considered as hostile, only so far as it judges the existing system of the national church to be partially inconsistent with Christian faith and discipline, and capable of being repaired without demolition.

Let us consider these two sources of hostility a little more in detail. A Nominalist of the Church, is a person who belongs to it either from self-interest of a direct and tangible kind ; or from dependence upon its external rites ; or from any other cause which essentially is not religious. This man is to the Establishment, as the dry-rot to the timbers in the roof of a cathedral—a silent, progressive, and unseen mischief ; but which may suddenly discover itself during the concussions of the next storm.

The more a church possesses of such characters, the greater is its weakness. They may be regular attendants on public worship, and equally regular

in visiting the circles of decorous dissipation ; dividing their time between an ostensible obedience to God, and an actual devotion to the world. If they deviate into acknowledged vice and unfashionable crimes, they yet do not detach themselves from ecclesiastical feelings ; but find a refuge from the accusations of conscience in the same sources of false comfort which deluded them in the courses of a more decent formality *. In both examples, the strange doctrine of Gray's Elegy receives its

* The Anti-Slavery Reporter for January 1830, remarks, with surprise, that in the last Report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel this institution should publish an account of the Negroes on the Codrington estates "receiving baptism, confirmation, and the Lord's Supper, and professing all which those ceremonies imply—that is to say, professing to be Christians, and spoken of as such—who, nevertheless, deliberately refuse to live in any other state than that of lawless and unchristian concubinage. We cannot comprehend what the standard is by which the claim to Christianity is measured in Barbadoes, when those are received into its pale, and admitted, and even invited, to partake of its highest ordinances, who openly and deliberately set at nought its plainest injunctions. They will submit, it seems, to every mere rite or ceremony ; they will repeat and assent to every article in the creed ; they will utter any form of sound words, which is prescribed to them ;—for these require no great sacrifice of any kind, not even the pains of understanding their meaning. But marriage seems, at least, to require some curb on sensuality, some restraint on animal appetite. And even this degree of restraint, to which the lowest heathens are found to submit, seems too much for these Christians so called."—It is only what is done every day at home ; with the exception, that the slaves of a Christian Society are the property of those who have the cup and the patten in one hand, and the whip in the other.

illustration—" the bosom of their Father and their God " is made the " dread abode " of their sins !

Yet from these victims of self-deception are perpetually heard the strongest expressions of attachment to the Church, and of irritation and disgust towards Dissenters ; as well as declamation still more caustic, against such of their own brethren as are not merely churchmen, but practical believers in Jesus Christ ; who keep aloof from a world, where they may have been already wounded, and now avoid, lest they should again fall, and fall to rise no more.

The Realists of our communion are sometimes designated as the most consistent Christians of the age. If it be so, one great cause of their superiority is to be found in what has been just alleged—they are watched and distrusted by the nominalists of their own church. They are also under the frowns of irreligious Dissenters. Exposed to the effects of two fires, they have reason to be doubly cautious. They journey through the temptations of life with greater circumspection ; and although the hostile movements of others do not form their security, yet they may be one means which the only Giver of safety condescends to employ for their sanctification and happiness.

And this leads to the remark, that the extension

of the Church will exhibit merely another form of weakness, if we proselyte to our party those separatists who are nothing better than the nominalists of their own diversified communities. They are, at present, practical infidels out of the Establishment; and their act of adhesion would be a ceremony far worse than unprofitable to all sides. We should only gain converts from the world, in a less fashionable shape; and if some of the more affluent adherents pressed into our sanctuary, with the plea invented by Charles the Second, that “no gentleman could be a Presbyterian,” they would quickly discover what a gentleman *could* be,—a libertine and formal worshipper, a sensualist and speculative theologian. It would, therefore, be an inglorious triumph to boast of deserters from the fortresses of Non-conformity, unless we had first ascertained whether these fugitives had escaped the strong-holds of sin, as well as the territory of dissent.

But there are, among the various branches of the British Reformation, many dissentients who are divided from us on genuine pleas of conscience—men who, in language which should repress the incursions of levity, “love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” Among *these* we may well aspire to extend the borders of the national establishment. They are already our friends—oh, how much

more consistent and stedfast than the nominalists of a church who speak of them only in disdain, and in the angry language of intolerance ! I refer to men who have caught the mantle of the Henrys, of Howe and Flavel, of Charnock and Owen ; who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, in common with Episcopalians of their own character ; and are living members of the communion of saints, as gathered within the invisible church, without any distinction except that of repentance towards God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The dissent of good men is, in itself, unfavourable to the influence and diffusion of our common Christianity. It is, also, unfriendly to the prosperity of the state ; since a country is so far injured as it is disunited. We, consequently, should ensure security to our Establishment, in proportion as its adherents swelled their numbers by the accession of the party in question. Unanimity is one of the elements of power.

The spiritual influence of the United Church will be augmented, in proportion as we gain recruits from these conscientious Dissenters, on the one hand ; and, on the other, as far as we purify it from secular pollutions, and rescue it from the insinuation that it is a lottery rich in prizes, where younger sons, and the relations and dependants

of men in power, may try their fortune, after other sources of promotion have failed.

With regard to such Separatists as concur, generally, in the doctrinal articles of our two national confessions, and live consistently with their creed, I cannot discern that a legislature has any moral right to establish a church from which such persons are excluded; and for a plain reason—they have every moral qualification. The inference is, that our own government is under an actual obligation to remove every doctrinal impediment now standing in their way; and that a refusal to do this, is a deliberate rejection of assistance from a party which, to a certain extent, is now opposed to us.

My position effectually excludes Socinians and Roman Catholics; and simply pleads the righteous cause of those whom, instead of repelling by questionable rites and superfluities, or dubious points of doctrine, we should receive with open arms, and thank God for their re-union.

Points of discipline and of ceremony might require mutual concession; and the boon would be interchanged all the more readily, were matters of far higher importance settled first. The Church has lost the support of good men, not so much from its diocesan episcopacy, as from the disputable

character of portions of its formularies. The difficulty has rather been, concerning the imposition of what was considered to be inconsistent with the rest of the system—a violation of its doctrinal symmetry.

CHAPTER II.

THE INEFFICIENCY OF MERCENARY AID—THE
PERILS OF PREFERMENT.

His looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent ; admiring more
The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific.

MILTON.

As to the injury done to the Church by the intrusion of mercenaries, allured to the temple by ambition and the love of money—admiring its pavement for its gold, and never raising their eyes above it—a Christian legislature is under a very serious obligation to remove *such* an attraction, as a measure of safety, to say the least ; and, we need not add, as a means of purification.

If there are persons who think that the security of a church is a matter of finance, and that the fidelity of ecclesiastics may be purchased, and, when purchased, certain to endure, they are mi-

serably mistaken. A paid advocate is open to the employ of all parties ; and his faithfulness lasts as long, and not a moment longer, than his client's means of remuneration. In the next cause, he may appear on behalf of that same client's worst enemy. Thus it is in common life ; and things do not in the least alter in any circumstances of self-interest. Politicians calculate upon the strength of their several parties, in proportion to the power of their treasuries, and of other machinery of influence. A gentleman, who marked the course of recent events, observed, " The Catholic bill has shewn to the country, that it was in the power of two individuals, in a few short months, to turn a majority of forty-five lords against a long-agitated question, into a majority of one hundred and forty-five in favour of that very identical question ; and that by the same machinery, a majority of six was turned into (I think) one hundred and eighty in the House of Commons." I do not quote Mr. Davenport's assertion as at all meddling myself with the question whence it sprung ; but simply as illustrating the way in which the world owns itself to be governed.

Ministers of state know what it is to have to deal with pensioners and placemen, in those innumerable instances where the salary of one office stimulates the appetite for more, and when an

aspirant for higher remuneration hints the possibility of joining the opposition in case of refusal. This is human nature ; and it runs round the entire circle of civil and ecclesiastical arrangements. Now, in the distempers of the church, as in all other cases, a prevention is far better than a cure. Take up the golden pavement of the temple, and they who frequent it will no longer have a temptation to be always looking downward : they may haply direct their eyes towards the sanctuary, and enjoy a glimmering of the vision beatific.

The friends of the Church, both real and pretended, little know how much it would gain, even by this kind of negative reform. One method of inviting and securing efficient aid, is by accepting it from a disinterested party—from men who would be equally staunch whether they lost or won. A writer, who could occasionally rise from the burlesque to the beautiful, says—

But loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game ;
True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shone upon !

I confidently believe, at this moment, that the Church numbers among its most unshaken supports clergymen who, in some quarters, are systematically neglected, and classed among the opponents of the very persons who ought to patronize

them. It is one of the infelicities of great men, not to know their best friends; to listen to plausible reports, and to act accordingly, without allowing the accused party an opportunity of explanation.

Do we, then, wish to transfer the splendid preferments of the Church to the hands of the religious clergy? Very far from it indeed. Good men are themselves too conscious, that they are not proof against the blandishments of prosperity. Their spiritual gold may be alloyed, or tarnished: in the one case, it will lose a portion of its purity; in the other, all its lustre. Plants of celestial growth usually thrive best, and luxuriate, under the shade of the Cross: if exposed to the meridian powers of the sun, they may be scorched and die.

It seems, at least, to be consistent with the economy of grace, not to trust an aspirant after eternal life with any species of worldly wealth or consequence till he has passed the period of his novitiate; and where God chooses to bestow a more than ordinary degree of temporal bounty, he can impart correspondent humility. There are, also, examples, where external prosperity is linked to bitter and corrosive trials, of which no one is conscious but the sufferer; who is the envy of others, and a burden, or even terror, to himself.

“Many of our prelates and great divines,” said

the late Rev. William Richardson, “are strenuous advocates for orthodoxy and holy life, and stir up the clergy to zeal and activity by the most impressive eloquence, in their sermons and charges; yet an honest and simple-hearted curate, who should set himself in earnest to follow their rules by labouring to convert his hearers to a godly life, and discharge the duties of a parish priest, would find himself much mistaken if he expected that such a conduct would obtain for him countenance or patronage. Those who have preferments in their disposal are generally surrounded by men of the world, who are despisers of them that are good, and cannot endure sound doctrine. Their evil report of the proceedings of a parish priest often brings down upon him oppression and persecution, rather than preferment. Yet I would not by any means excite discontent in ‘the oxen that tread out the corn.’ I am not myself a disappointed man, but succeeded early in life to a situation above my hopes and merits; and I think it better that the labouring clergy who are serious in religion should have nothing to expect from men, but the same contempt and neglect that the first preachers of the Gospel met with, and should look for no assured support but what carried *them* through their painful course of duty and suffering. The work of God owes little to human patronage;

and the favour of those who have preferment to bestow, is more commonly a snare than an advantage : as I never desired it, so I never sought it.

“ If young men are bred up to the church with views entirely secular, and are taught to consider preferment and temporal emolument as the sole object, how can they take upon them the pastoral office in any other disposition of mind than that which governs the choice and conduct of those members of their family who embrace the medical, jurisprudential, military, or commercial professions ? Will they not use the same means in the church, that the others take to advance themselves ? And what are these means ? I need not say what they are : assuredly they are such as no serious, godly, conscientious clergyman can use. That sort of merit which ought to recommend to preferment is totally inconsistent with the qualities and modes of living which procure a man the favour of the great ; nay, it must infallibly ruin his prospects of rising in the world, and fix him in one of the lowest stations, whatever might once have been his hope from learning or connection : for the moment he becomes serious in religion, and exemplary as a parish priest, he is, by the courtesy of England, styled a Methodist ; and this name will make him obnoxious to all who have preferment to bestow. Should he happen to succeed to a

benefice, it is considered a *portentous* circumstance, and an act of *ecclesiastical suicide* in those who presented him.

“ Let us not, however, murmur at the hardships to which we are subjected for the truth’s sake, which is in us ; but take an example of faith and patience from the primitive preachers of the Gospel. If we are defamed or discountenanced for righteousness sake, we are taught to rejoice and be exceeding glad, as a mark of our separation from the corrupt mass of mankind, and adoption of God. If we could attain a state of perfect ease and honour, it would make all the promises, the consolations, and the motives held forth in the New Testament, useless to us.”

It would check the untimely eagerness of many a candidate for ecclesiastical dignity, if he could read what passes in the heart of those who have preceded him in the career of successful ambition, and obtained at length their envied object. The glare and dazzle have vanished. They have become more dependent, the higher they rose ; and they may have felt, what they had once only read, —“ Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block ; and let the things that should have been for their wealth, be unto them an occasion of falling.”

Such considerations might beneficially dwell in

the remembrance of religious clergymen; and teach them that it is safer to pass through the tranquil and obscure vales of life, than to climb the bordering heights. So thought one of their own number, the late Rev. Thomas Scott—the faithful adviser of his own party, and one of the soundest and most practical divines of his age: and his testimony is all the more valuable, because he was himself of plebeian origin, and therefore more exposed to the untried allurements of a higher station in society than those who are born in it, and with whom it frequently occurs that familiarity produces its varied measures of contempt*.

The proper income of a minister of religion seems to be that which places him above the anxieties of poverty, and beneath the temptations of affluence. If he frames a wish on such a subject, he adopts the choice of Agur,—“ Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or else I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.”

The world is wise enough to *talk about* the golden mean; but in practice the metaphor is not generally realized—their love of gold itself is any

* See the Twentieth Chapter, in the sequel.

thing but moderate. They have also discovered, that “the post of honour is a private station ;” while their souls are incessantly panting for publicity, and situations of command and patronage. The prayer of Agur supposes danger in the two extremes of poverty and riches. The pauper is tempted to discontent and envy ; and to quarrel with the righteous government of God, as though our Owner and Benefactor were capricious and unjust in his dispensations. The man of affluence is in peril of being independent of God, and of feeling secure and at ease in his possessions ; as though he no longer wanted the Divine assistance, and had no occasion to say “Give us this day our daily bread ;” for he has much goods laid up for many years, and he makes his riches a castle and house of defence.

Add to these considerations the fact, that elevation in the scale of ecclesiastical society insensibly connects itself with luxuries and time-consuming habits—*amici fures temporis* was, I believe, another of the world’s discoveries—such as gradually creep into families, noiseless and unsuspected, and rob some who are not always aware of their losses. In this view, sinecures are an actual premium upon indolence and quiet dissipation, even when held by good men. What they are when in possession of others, is notorious to an inquisitive age, ever

on the watch to find matter of accusation against pensioners of all classes, and always asking the rude and abrupt question, natural to a commercial nation,—What do we get in return for our money?

We are painfully conscious how unwelcome these remarks must be to many—but by no means to *all*—who have high preferment, either in possession or reversion. They will stigmatize the writer as an enemy; and will not wonder that he levels his rifle from behind the shelter of an anonymous book; and finds it more politic to be a bush-fighter, instead of joining a regiment on the naked plain. But the law of nations allows the introduction of a rifle-brigade into the modern art of war; and the ecclesiastical critics who skirmish in our monthly and quarterly journals belong to the corps in question. And what then? and what more does the present writer say on the exigencies of the times, than is urged, although it may be in less direct language, by many who will frown upon *his* interference?

“If we are to keep our place, it is,” says the Quarterly Review, “indispensably necessary that every incumbrance should be removed which clogs the activity and energy of individuals or the government. Every part of the machine of society must be adapted to the increased exertion it is called upon to make. If this be so, every branch

of our public and private economy—the administration of the affairs of parishes and counties, the state of charities, corporations, public schools, colleges, the law, the church, and the whole management of our foreign dependencies—must necessarily submit to examination and amendment. Wealthy as the country is, and attached to ancient institutions as it has always wisely been, it can no longer support the burden of places or proceedings which can be simplified or dispensed with. While no branch of our institutions ought to be touched which can be safely let alone, there yet exists an imperative necessity for submitting many of them to alteration. When the situation of a state becomes really critical ; when its affairs require to be effectually disentangled ; it is neither to men of mere routine, nor to proficients in statistical calculation and the metaphysics of political economy, that the wise will look.”

I can only plead, in my own case, that, as an individual, I could bear with greater abuses in the church, and in the state too, than actually exist. But there are hosts of enemies already marshalled, and bodies on the march to join them, who will *not* bear these things.

Allow me to ask the impatient reader, Are you ready with your replies, against the day when the spoiler sends a summons to the garrison to sur-

render ; and he has a train of artillery at hand, and is preparing to erect his batteries within breaching distance ? The answer, also, must be one which will either satisfy him, or justify your own resistance. The alternative may indeed be difficult ; but it *must* be determined upon. Now, my own share in the impending struggle and its relations I profess to be this—to shew that the church may conquer by submission, and triumph by the defeat of its false friends ; while its declared enemies shall then raise the siege, and conclude a peace honourable to all sides.

CHAPTER III.

MODES OF QUESTIONABLE DEFENCE — THE
DELUSIONS OF GOOD MEN—VIGILANCE OF
PAPAL SPIES.

Where you are liberal of your loves and counsels,
Be sure you be not loose; for those you make your friends,
And give your hearts to, when they once perceive
The least rub in your fortunes, fall away
Like water from ye.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN reference to the approaching day of adversity,
there is all the truth of the most sober prose in the
admired lines of Gray—

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
Self-pleasing folly's idle brood,—
Wild laughter, noise, and thoughtless joy :
Light they disperse ; and with them go
The summer-friend, the flattering foe.

I too much value the beauties of the didactic
muse, not to add an echo of the preceding lines—

The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes are flown !

Cleanse the church of its sinecures, and unequal distributions of wealth, pluralities, and golden bribes; and the *summer-friend* and treacherous flatterer must retire upon other resources, and form alliances with patrons of their own character. We shall be stronger by their desertion. Our numbers will be thinned, and our arm invigorated. We shall act in concert; unimpeded by irregular movements, and by correspondence with the enemy.

The only effective defence of our Establishment must be precisely the reverse of what is usually offered by its partisans: as, for instance, when they answer an accuser by recrimination, and when they resent imputations of imperfection as insolent. It is a mode of warfare in which the church will inevitably lose ground. Its true way to victory, is concession without meanness; not an abject appeal to an enemy's candour or transient feelings of compassion, but to the undisputed principles of right. Peace may thence result, although on the basis of reciprocity: each party must sacrifice something; and both parties should be able to compute their gains.

In the place, however, of such a treaty, our rash apologists resort to powerless and suicidal methods of safety. A favourite procedure, for example, is to pronounce from the pulpit and the press high eulogies on a Liturgy called incomparable by many

who never read a single line in any other ritual, and, of course, are guilty of a practical fraud. Another is, to allege the superiority of our church over every communion of the Protestant earth; notwithstanding the asserter of such claim may be totally ignorant of the Scandinavian churches, or cannot tell whether those of Hungary and France are governed by bishops or presbyters, or use liturgical worship. Which of our apologists ever saw a Prussian Prayer-book, or knows more of the religion of Protestant Europe than from the desultory notices of some recent traveller?

But, supposing the contrary to all this, our actual superiority would be still nothing to a domestic opponent. In his view, it could be nothing better than a proof, that, among many bad systems, the least share of a general evil is ours; as, in the empire of the blind, the one-eyed are kings. Sermons from our own pulpits, and books from our own pens, may gratify those of our own party—that is, they may convince such as need no conviction. The labour, however, is worse than lost, as it continues a mischievous custom; for the party whom our apologists might wish to convert are encouraged in their opposition, and disbelief of our pretensions, by observing that we have nothing to say but a repetition of the last act of self-adulation. It is marking GENUINE on the doors of

our churches ; while we entirely forget that the neighbouring chapels, Papal and Socinian, are placarded with exactly the same type, paper, and inscription.

When will common sense—or rather the simplicity and sincerity of the Gospel—teach us a more excellent way ; and persuade us to abandon the vulgar tactics of a world which is, all the while, deriding us for our awkward imitations of its own craft ?

I cannot pass from this portion of our subject, without an expression of surprize at the delusion practised upon themselves—it is allowed, unconsciously—by such of the religious clergy as suppose that they disarm the nominalists of their own church by pursuing the course now censured. They think that bad men will be soothed into a compliance with *their* principles, by sermons and pamphlets coincident with the high-church scheme. But, no—the subject of their well-intended blandishment is too shrewd and cautious, too suspicious of the quarter whence the eulogy trickles, to be lulled by its gentle murmurs. The men of this world are never off their guard ; or, if surprized for a moment, regain their posts with an energy and self-possession which sufficiently indicate their habitual watchfulness, and impatience of being taken unawares.

The children of light are less wise, and less vigilant ; and do not always know, that when they earnestly praise the discipline and ritual of the Establishment in visitation discourses, and on more private occasions, they create feelings of distrust and incredulity where they least suspect such a consequence.

The reasons shall not be mentioned here, why these things are so. The general fact is, that a really genuine Christian, whether clerical or lay, will never, among the mass of nominalists, establish his credit as a sound churchman. His regularity, is artifice ; his consistency, sustained pretence ; his loyalty and canonical obedience—whatever the enemy chooses to call them. A religious *life* will never be forgiven by the world.

Another consideration is connected with our immediate topic. The irreligious supporters of the church will so far make a tool of a pious clergyman, as to quote him, up to the point of his coalescence with themselves. They will fortify their own self-interested, self-righteous, and antinomian attachment to the hierarchy, by *selected* materials. They are glad, for example, to call in the assistance of the William Law of the Bangorian controversy, to the exclusion of the author of the Serious Call. The cuirass he wore, and the sword he brandished, in the war against Hoadly, are hung up in their

armoury, and kept bright and ready for occasional service ; but his devout writings slumber upon a high and dusty shelf ; and Gibbon himself has assisted them in placing there his protest against the entertainments of the stage.

In the art of sketching character, Law is pronounced, by the “ luminous and philosophical historian,” to be the rival of La Bruyere ; and the following passage may illustrate the justice of his comparison :—

“ Cognatus has no other end in growing rich, but that he may leave a considerable fortune to a niece, whom he has educated in expensive finery by what he has saved out of the tithes of two livings. The neighbours look upon him as a happy clergyman ; and some of them intend to dedicate their own sons to the church, because they see how well it has succeeded with Cognatus, whose father was but an ordinary man.—But now, if Cognatus, when he first entered into holy orders, had perceived how absurd a thing it is to grow rich by the Gospel ; if he had proposed to himself the example of some primitive father ; if he had had the piety of the great St. Austin in his eye, who durst not enrich any of his relations out of the revenue of the church ; if, instead of rejoicing in the happiness of a second living, he had thought it as unbecoming the office of a clergyman to traffic

for gain in holy things, as to open a shop —— * ” and then the antagonist of Hoadly draws inferences which may easily be foreseen.

The aid of Hooker has also been called in, on the principle of selection, by ecclesiastics who accept the defender of the outworks of the church, but reject his assistance in the citadel. The same course is pursued at this moment; as in examples where conscientious men eulogize the ritual in their public addresses, and are heard for the moment with decent gravity, but are laughed at, over the evening wine and walnuts of their morning auditors, for the doctrine and practical remonstrances interwoven with their eulogies.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am not complaining of references to the Liturgy for the sake of edification — in which case it is a powerful auxiliary to the ministry of the Gospel—but only suggest the expediency of offering something better, than what will be looked upon as a compulsory concession to those who either reject or abuse the benevolence.

In all ecclesiastical discussions, it is but bare prudence to abstain from indiscriminate commendation of our own system. It is worse than headlong censure. Unmeasured praise awakens

* Serious Call, chap. xiii.

suspicion, envy, and the keenest arts of scrutiny ; while rude and coarse abuse excites sympathy even in an enemy, and sooner or later recoils upon itself.

I am not, indeed, the first adventurer who aspires to discover a middle passage between the opposing continents of our ecclesiastical earth. The *Via Media*, the *Pax Ecclesiæ*, and the *Irenicum*, are old titles ; and the writers of works under these appellations died without much visible success in alluring mankind to moderation and harmony. I follow their track, and it will conduct me also to the grave !

When I look back to the disappointments and to the sepulchres of my predecessors—they were such in point of time, whatever differences there are of another and more serious character—I may well ask, “What can the man do that cometh after the king ? *” But, as a sagacious philosopher † observes, “A community in a state of such active progress as ours at this moment is, daily rears new bodies of readers ;” and he implies that these must be supplied with aliment.

It is of more importance to consider, that we have also rising around us new bodies of politicians,

* Ecclesiastes ii. 12.

† Sir James Macintosh’s Preface to his History of England.

economists, and theorists in the complex science of government, whether under the crown or the mitre. These persons are, numerically, too strong to be despised ; and, with many exceptions, possess that half-knowledge by which they make themselves acquainted with what was once a secret proper to the learned, or to the cabinets of statesmen and prelates. Neither are such men to be found exclusively in the lower and middle ranks of society : they are more numerous than may be suspected, by many statistes of the day, in families of high birth and influence.

There is another point, bearing very seriously upon our general subject. I mean, not only the recent circumstances of the Catholic Relief Bill ; but the inquisitive curiosity, eagerness, and oblique look, with which the Papal world is regarding the progress of our Establishment. It is not, I trust, an unadvised use of Scripture to allege, that “ we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses ” — “ made a spectacle to the world and to men ” — as to lay us under the most urgent obligations to “ quit ourselves like men ; ” that “ he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us. ” The Roman Catholics are waiting to see, and to report at head-quarters, what will be done by her whom *they* ironically term the eldest daughter of the Re-

formation. It is one of the crises of our Protestant church.

The enemy knows well, and has plentifully taunted us with the statement, that our ancestors justified their separation from the Papacy, because of its exclusiveness, affluence, luxurious practices, and many other symptoms or positive proofs of corruption, including a long list of doctrinal and ceremonial extravagances. It is, consequently, but a measure of conservative prudence to determine, at such a moment, what can be done to silence and subdue, also, *this* enemy; or, if this be expecting too much, to convince the spectators of the conflict that we have, at least, conquered by suffering. *Vincit qui patitur* was the motto of Archbishop Whitgift; and, on the present occasion, it may be wise to inscribe it on our own banner.

If we take a retrospective glance at the fathers of the Anglican Church, the first object which we catch on their horizon is a volume of smoke rising from the fires of martyrdom. The question is, how much are *we* prepared to give up in defending the Protestant cause against its yet surviving, and yet inveterate enemy? Bishop Horsley, in his primary charge at St. David's (1790), has well defined the differences between the secular and the spiritual claims of the hierarchy. He writes: "To be a High-church-man, in the true import

of the word in the English language, God forbid that ever I should deserve the imputation ! A High-church-man, in the true sense of the word, is one that is a bigot to the secular rights of the priesthood ; one who claims for the hierarchy, upon pretence of a right inherent in the sacred office, all those powers, honours, and emoluments, which they enjoy under an establishment ; which are held, indeed, by no other tenure than at the will of the prince, or by the law of the land. To the prince, or to the law, we acknowledge ourselves indebted for all our secular possessions ; for the rank and dignity annexed to the superior order of the clergy ; for our secular authority ; for the jurisdiction of our courts ; and for every civil effect which follows the exercise of our spiritual authority. All these rights and honours, with which the priesthood is adorned by the civil magistrate, are quite distinct from the spiritual commission which we bear, for the administration of our Lord's proper kingdom. They have no necessary connection with it. They stand merely on the ground of human law, and vary, like the rights of other citizens, as the laws, which create them, vary. And in every church, connected, like our church, with the state by an establishment, even the spiritual authority cannot be conferred without the consent of the supreme civil magistrate."

There are many degrees of concession and sacrifice, on this side of the flames of Smithfield ; and it would seem to argue a fallen and miserably degraded state of the Reformation among ourselves, if we are resolved still to retain all the riches and secular grandeur of the deserted church, at the very time when we are preaching and writing, without intermission, against its enormities.

It is much the same, as if the earliest Christians had possessed themselves of all the temples, and sources of worldly power, once in heathen hands ; and, when upbraided by the former owners for their inconsistency in applying such spoils to the uses of the new religion, either returned no apology, or repelled the remonstrants by an intimation, that the “ root of all evil ” changed its nature when removed into the enclosures of the Christian church.

How far this analogy may be pursued, I presume not to determine. That its general principle bears directly upon the circumstances of the opposing hierarchies, cannot be questioned. The Roman Catholic should be compelled to feel, that we retain our system of faith, and continue to separate ourselves from the Papal world, not because we should lose place, power, and money by a re-union ; but because we love the souls of

men too well to expose them again to the sorceries of Antichrist ;—that we maintain our church on any grounds except those of self-interest ; and are ready, in the passing day, to enter, sincerely and vigorously, upon a second reformation, in order to remove the imperfections of the first ; and to prove to every impartial observer our willingness to resist all pleas of avarice and ambition, for the sake of the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I shall close this chapter by citing the evidence of Mr. Southey ; not because, with all its weight and importance, it is really wanted ; but to shew what is thought of our present prospects by men who possess a considerable influence on the public mind ; and are, on every account, the last persons to indulge themselves in fearful prophecies, some of which tend to work their own fulfilment. Hear his dark sayings :—

“ Flatter not yourselves with delusive expectations. To descry that great struggles are yet to come, is within the reach of human foresight ; that great tribulations must needs accompany them ; and that these may be, you know not how near at hand. Throughout what is called the Christian world there will be a contest between impiety and religion : the former is every where gathering strength ; and whenever it breaks loose, the foun-

dations of human society will be shaken. Do not suppose that you are safe from this danger because you are blest with a pure creed, a reformed ritual, and a tolerant church. Even here the standard of impiety has been set up; and the drummers, who beat the march of intellect through your streets, lanes, and market-places, are enlisted under it. The struggle between Popery and Protestantism is renewed; and let no man deceive himself, by a vain reliance upon the increased knowledge or improved humanity of the times. Wickedness is ever the same; and you never were in so much danger from moral weakness.

“ On what do you rely for security against these dangers? On public opinion?—you might as well calculate upon the constancy of wind and weather in this uncertain climate. On the progress of knowledge?—it is such knowledge as serves only to facilitate the course of delusion. On the laws?—the law, which should be like a sword in a strong hand, is weak as a bulrush if it be feebly administered in time of danger. On the people?—they are divided. On the parliament?—every faction will be fully and formidably represented there? On the government?—

“ The root of all your evil is in the sinfulness of the nation. The principle of duty is weakened among you; that of moral obligation is loosened;

that of religious obedience is destroyed. Look at the worldliness of all classes ; the greediness of the rich ; the misery of the poor ; and the appalling depravity which is spreading among the lower classes through town and country—a depravity which proceeds unchecked because of the total want of discipline, and for which there is no other corrective than what may be supplied by fanaticism, which is itself an evil.”

But, if fanaticism does supply a corrective, let this remedy or palliative be defined, and, as far as it acts favourably, be administered by authority. The term thus ambiguously employed had, however, better be displaced ; and we might then be taught, that nations, as well as individuals, may be regenerated by a Divine energy. “ It shall come to pass in the last days, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.....and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

CHAPTER IV.

PROTECTION FROM SECULAR SPOLIATION.

The Commons of Great Britain, in national emergencies, will never seek their resource from the confiscation of the estates of the church and the poor. Sacrilege and proscription are not among the ways and means in our committee of supply. The Jews in 'Change Alley have not yet dared to hint their hopes of a mortgage on the revenues belonging to the see of Canterbury.—BURKE.

WHATEVER sanction may be given, by the present race of economists, to the sentiments advocated forty years since by the great anti-revolutionary writer of this country, my own conviction is, that the most impregnable lines of the Established Church are drawn around a parish under the pastoral care of a devout and energetic clergyman; who lives secluded from the world, and, in reference to preferment, occupying the middle station between indigence and wealth. As the Master of such a servant once said, "The prince

of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me ;” so may we apply the saying, in its subordinate and restricted sense, to the case in question. The infidel and the formalist, the Papal emissary and the political spoiler, may draw up their hosts in the neighbouring plains, send out parties to reconnoitre, and report to the commander in chief—but entirely in vain. Let the clergyman die, and be succeeded by one of an opposite character ; and I will no longer answer for the safety of himself and his flock.

But as illustration by metaphor is painting, and not logic, I will not plead for the entire accuracy of the above statement. All I properly venture to assert is, that the security and prosperity of the church are chiefly dependent upon the personal character and labours of its ministers ; and, further, upon the moderation of their domestic arrangements. Good men, so circumstanced, are the spiritual parents of large families, who are conscious that they receive an equitable remuneration for their services. Here is a *labourer*, and not a lounge ; worthy of his *hire*, and not of overpayment. He preaches the *Gospel*, and not something subversive of it ; he *lives* of his work, and does not luxuriate of it. All this is as it should be. It is *ecclesiæ decus et tutamen*.

A visit to such a parish, and such a pastor, dis-

covers the theoretic beauty of a national church. Imaginative writers, and fanciers of rustic felicity, have finished their pictures after an original thus perfect—excepting, indeed, that they have omitted to copy the more spiritual lights of the piece; or, that they have done as Goldsmith did, in describing wonderful effects without the least reference to an adequate cause. There is a luxuriance of blossom, and of actual produce; but whether from a vine or a bramble, is more than the poet or novelist ever fancied or dreamed. Thus, for example, sings the bard and prophet of the Deserted Village:—

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood: at his controul,
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down, the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

This is one of the many poetical fictions which school-boys are taught to repeat and admire as really true—as though the country clergyman of Goldsmith *could* achieve a result so mighty. It is turning a soldier into a conqueror before he is furnished with arms, and before it is known whether he has power and courage to use them.

In the mean time, *we* may be on the eve of a severe conflict. When the adversary of our Church, during his preparatory movements, draws off his

battalions, in despair, from parishes really protected by human instruments under Divine disposal, he retires upon the nearest pluralist or cathedral ; and soon takes up a position whence it may be difficult, perhaps impossible, to dislodge him.

This will be especially the case in Ireland ; where all defensive weapons, wielded by such combatants as Bishop Elrington, must be powerless as the lance of a sophist. Even Lord Mountcashel has refrained from urging any thing so strong on his own side, as has been supplied, and by a high-church writer, in the English division of the United Kingdom ; who asserts, that “ from the time of the conquest of Ireland down to this hour, the Church of England established in that country has entirely neglected to preach to nearly two-fifths of the population ; and while in Wales and in Scotland care was taken that the clergy should preach in Welsh and in Gaelic, no such object was attempted in Ireland. There certainly is no parallel to this iniquity to be found in the Papal church ; and it is a wonder how any clergyman of the Church of England, particularly in Ireland, can venture to say one word against Papal abomination, until he has protested publicly against this barefaced violation of common honesty in his own church. The clergy, however, though they

have done no duty, have not omitted to exact the pay to which they were only entitled for service performed: they have exacted, with a rigour in the ecclesiastical courts unknown to the king's courts, the last penny of their real or assumed rights, from the starving population; while many parishes have been without incumbents, without houses for their residence, or churches in which they could preach*."

It is a fact, bidding high defiance to concealment, that there is no sympathy between the holders of ecclesiastical sinecures and the masters of public opinion. Apologies and explanations have been offered; and, instead of being accepted, have only furnished fresh materials for scrutiny: they have put the dogs of war upon the scent again.

The next step to renewed and keener inquiry may be—not a more equal, and properly remunerative, distribution of clerical property among its right owners, but—its transfer to the treasury of the state. It is against this sacrilegious spoliation that we must protect ourselves, by such measures as may at once demonstrate the treachery of the spoiler, and our own willingness to apply abused revenues to beneficial purposes.

* Christian View of Present State of the Country, &c. 1829.

In amplifying this hint, it may be expedient to remind such economists as are calculating upon the diversion of clerical estates into secular channels, that the property of the Establishment is legally as much its own, as the demesne at Chatsworth is the right of the Duke of Devonshire. In both examples, the title is exactly the same,—an hereditary possession, recognised by the law of the land, and capable of defence only by existing regulations of the legislature. The power to alienate is quite another thing; as a private estate is distinct from the estate of a corporation.

I postpone to a future chapter the insertion of *the world's* estimate of ecclesiastical affluence; subjoining, in the present instance, the sentiments of a Christian journalist, who writes as follows:—
 “The revenues of the Church of England are by no means too large, but they are most unequally, absurdly, and indecently distributed. The moderation which the Gospel enjoins; the example which its ministers are required to exhibit of indifference to temporal things and devotedness to things eternal; the example of our Lord, of his Apostles, and of the primitive church, all unite in enforcing the necessity of a very different ‘order’ being introduced into ‘the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.’ And it is obvious, even to the common sense of mankind,

that while her episcopal form of government requires a diversity of order among the clergy, and a consequent diversity of income, that difference ought not to be regulated arbitrarily, or so as to present in any case a provocative to indulgence in the pomps and vanities of the world, and thus a temptation to the minister of God to offer a pattern of self-indulgence, rather than self-denial; or, on the other hand, by an insufficiency of income to expose him to the anxieties and contempt of poverty; but, by a prudent and considerate distribution of its resources, to make such provisions as shall maintain a suitable congruity between the duties of the office, and the expenditure which natively and properly attaches to it. In vain shall we look through every order of civil society, or of military life, for such reprehensible discrepancies as disfigure, in this respect, our venerable and beloved church. Who derives from the country such a princely income as the Bishop of Durham? Does the Commander of the Forces? Does the Chief Justice of England? What representative of Majesty in foreign parts? What Minister of the Crown? The Prime Minister of England has no such emoluments. The Princes of the Blood are poor in comparison.—There is an incongruity in this state of things, contemplated in this one light. That a single minister of that church which,

‘ though in the world, is not,’ if a true church, ‘ of the world,’ should draw from the country far larger emoluments than those of any of its civil or military dignitaries, is truly and absolutely incongruous.— But this single view discloses not one-half of the subject; and even what is presented cannot be seen in a true light, till contemplated as a part of the whole. We must not only gaze upon the gilded pinnacles of the temple, but contemplate, in its penury and debasement, the broad bases from whence they spring. And here, where is the gentleman so low, so poverty-stricken, so depressed, as a very large proportion of the active and efficient labourers in the rich and beautiful vineyard of the Church of England? In the sacred profession, as in others, it is to be expected that those who cannot obtain employment, or who have lost it, should be exposed to pecuniary distress. We speak not of these. We speak only of those who are spending their full strength in her service; and we believe in no profession— army, navy, law, physic—is such poverty and destitution to be found: and *that* among those who have peculiarly and eminently the weight of the labour laid upon them. Where is the gentleman, in any of the other professions, who would receive cast-off raiment? And yet there are *multitudes* of gentlemen (gentlemen in every sense of the

word), in this holy calling, who are now receiving with tears of thankfulness old clothes which our footmen and maid-servants would not wear.—To honest poverty is attached no shame. We have the highest authority for stating that effective and saving Christianity is more frequently united to it, than to the riches and splendour of the church or of the world. In a time of necessity, and even in circumstances of bare expediency, it may be the privilege and glory of the ministers of Christ to let their hands minister to their necessities. But when a nation has provided liberally for the endowment of its church; when all its clergy might be placed in comfort and independence; when the prayer of Agur, ‘Give me neither poverty nor riches,’ might be realized in the case of all; to have a portion of them rolling in cumbrous and unseemly wealth, and a still larger body sunk in abject and anxious poverty, is primarily and eminently disgraceful to the church, and reflects dishonour and disgrace on the nation. If, through the instrumentality of *charity*, the Apostle recommended that an *equality*, not absolute but approximate, should be made in the circumstances of *two* churches; with what accumulated force, with what Christian propriety, may *such* an equality be enforced among the ministers of the same church? ‘I mean not that other men be eased and you

burdened ; but that your abundance may be a supply for their want, that there may be equality.'—The glaring inconsistencies, the manifest injustice, the antichristian character and tendency, of this system ; the dark and wide-spreading evils of which it is the living spring ; have been long seen and lamented by the wise and the good ; but brooded over rather with the blackness of despair, than contemplated with the cheerfulness of hope. Hence pluralities. Hence non-residence. Hence the removal of Bishops from see to see ; exposing them, as men of like passions with ourselves, to temptation to unworthy compliances, and *the order* to unmerited obloquy and scorn. Hence the disgraceful spectacle of one class of men doing the duties of cures, and another drawing their emoluments. Hence one man *nominally* doing the duty of two or three parishes. Hence the man to whom is committed the care of 1,000 or 10,000 souls, of whom he must give an account, wasting his strength and best hours in teaching pupils. Hence, again, the multiplication of Dissent. Hence the gross ignorance of all classes on religious subjects ; the infidelity ; the scepticism ; the indifference ; the mere nominal attachment to the church and to religion, which is so prevalent. Hence the imminent danger of the church and of the country.—Many of the practices which we have mentioned

act and re-act on one another; strengthen and support each other: but we are persuaded that an attentive consideration of the subject will strengthen the impression that THAT glaring evil to which our attention has at present been more immediately called, lies at the foundation of the whole; and that its destruction would so loosen the whole framework of corrupt materials, as to make its overthrow comparatively easy."

As the Papal distinctions of the *spirituale* and the *regale* are unknown in a Protestant kingdom, the legislature has a perfect right so to order the disposal of ecclesiastical property as to employ it best for its original purposes—but in subserviency only to the mutations of time. But even here is a limitation. Government cannot equitably meddle with an individual's existing interests. Nothing could be more unfair than for the civil minister of the day to take away from an ecclesiastic what he now holds; and which was given to him, formerly, on the tacit assurance that he should retain it in quiet possession.

A contrary course was pursued by that great master of spoliation, Henry the Eighth; and the cruelty of his conduct to the monastic orders—the members of which might be quite as wicked as the reports of the Visitors affirm—is one of the many proofs, that we must never measure the value

of any reform by the personal character of its patrons.

This recurrence to the period of the Reformation brings to our recollection the fact, that our ancestors furnish an ample precedent, for legislating with a restricted freedom on church property. Immense estates, fines, legacies, gifts, and extortions of all kinds, had enriched a hierarchy utterly at variance with the present system; and there are not wanting casuists, at this moment, who insist that we are the receivers of stolen goods; and that if our forefathers chose, in the sixteenth century, to quarrel with the crucifix and the confessional, they were at perfect liberty to do so, but *not* to convert the Pope's wealth to the use of anti-catholic systems.

To be, in this relation, a *ductor dubitantium*, is no ambition of mine. But I think that no man, with the above fact within range of his retrospective vision, will prudently venture to question the power of any subsequent government to make a spiritual—using the term in its technical sense—application of spiritual funds, as it may choose to determine.

CHAPTER V.

ABUSE AND DIFFICULTIES OF PATRONAGE—
REMEDIAL SUGGESTIONS.

Oh that estates, degrees, and offices
 Were not deriv'd corruptly ; and that clear honour
 Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer !
 How many then would cover, who stand bare ;
 How many be commanded, that command !

————— And how much honour
 Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,
 To be new varnish'd. SHAKSPEARE.

WHY should there not be an equitable revision of our economy, directly suited to the exigencies of the age ? As affairs now stand, a prebend or canonry, for example, may be given to a young man, whose only power of accepting it resides in his having been last week admitted to holy orders. His *claim* may be something quite distinct from character, talent, and acquirement ; as, from nepotism, or political connection, or any other cause not resolvable into religion itself. Added to this

may be the fact, that he has other preferment also ; and such as ought to be perfectly adequate to his station and requirements.

In such an instance, we have payment awarded, not merely for work not done, but which the party may never be either willing or able to do ; and with all the probability against this, arising from the temptation which is incurred by *any* man—clerical or lay—who is remunerated in advance, and therefore feels himself at ease, and having no impulse to action.

We are not asserting the existence of such cases, but the possibility of their occurrence ; and it is acknowledged to be wise policy, in all circumstances under the controul of public vigilance, never to concede opportunities of abuse ; knowing the liability of the purest schemes to be perverted by human agents. We also ought to recollect, that the more self-knowledge a conscientious man possesses, the greater will be his anxiety to be guarded against partialities and mistakes by definite and restrictive rules.

“The road to eminence and power from obscure condition,” says Burke, “ought not to be made too easy, nor a thing too much of course. If rare merit be the rarest of all rare things, it ought to pass through some sort of probation. The temple of honour ought to be seated on an eminence. If it

be open through virtue, let it be remembered too, that virtue is never tried but by some difficulty, and some struggle." So wrote this great statesman to the early leaders of the French Revolution; to warn *them* of the peril of bestowing emolument and station on raw and undisciplined candidates!

A few years afterwards, when contrasting what he terms his mortuary pension with the ancient grants of the Crown to the Russell family, he says: "The Crown has considered me after long service; the Crown has paid the Duke of Bedford by advance. He has had a long credit for any service which he may perform hereafter. My merits, whatever they are, are original and personal; his are derivative. It is his ancestor, the original pensioner, that has laid up this inexhaustible fund of merit." And he then intimates, that his Grace might have said of himself, and his aged opponent, "I am a young man with very old pensions; he is an old man with very young pensions."—How applicable is all this to nepotism, to the accumulated wealth of ecclesiastical families, and to the unmerited distribution of preferment!

It is natural, indeed, for persons wishing to benefit mankind, to desire an extensive range of patronage; or, at least, mentally to luxuriate on the consequences which might flow from a patron's disposal of numerous benefices among deserving

candidates. Little do they know the embarrassment, and inward perplexity, occasioned to great men by the possession of what is so frequently called an enviable distinction. The memorable confession of Louis the Fourteenth, or of some other potentate—for such stories might originate in any court—that when he gave away a place, he made ninety-nine applicants discontented and one ungrateful, is far more realized among ecclesiastics, than the uninitiated will believe.

Preferments fall into the hands of a prelate, or of a nobleman, who receives letters and visits within the next four-and-twenty hours, such as may wound the delicacy of his mind and shake the strength of his principles. Some of his replies are construed into acts of oblivion towards those who were his associates at school, college, or in private life. Others disappoint expectations which it was foolish or absurd to indulge. In another view, his refusal is too certain to create domestic and social estrangements; while, in all these examples, the idly busy world around sympathizes with each repelled expectant, or—what is far more likely—titters and chuckles over his failure.

But, putting religion quite out of the question, it is not easy to estimate the difficulty imposed upon a sensitive mind by making it arbitrate among conflicting candidates, of perhaps equal

pretensions to favour; all of whom the patron would willingly pass by, to prefer a friend far more acceptable to himself. Yet he is probably driven to select one of the more importunate among the rest; and thus loses the subject of his own choice, without gaining any thing valuable in the individual actually chosen. Such is, very often, the privilege of a patron—to be more dependent upon accident, caprice, and a thousand other causes of disgust, than the men who crowd to his levee for a piece of bread!

If emotions merely human are excited thus painfully, let the reader, if under the influence of Christian feeling, compassionate a religious patron; who is tried sometimes to the utmost, by rejecting applications from candidates whom he numbers among old, and even valued, connections; but cannot gratify, because of the dubiousness, or positive worldliness, of their character. The distress is increased, when the ties of blood bind more closely the previously-named obligations.

The pain of refusal is, perhaps, greater still, when a patron of this class is beset—or receives gentle insinuations to the same effect—by men professedly of his own principles, and in many instances acting consistently with them, but still discovering an unmeet and forward eagerness for preferment; such as evidently indicates a want of

self-forgetfulness, and an aspiration after wealth and honour for which they are yet unprepared, and whence they might derive an unforeseen occasion of falling.

The perplexity receives a still further increase, when *such* a candidate returns to his party with the report of disappointment: for then his feelings are communicated to a coterie; and the patron has to sustain the obloquy of a circle extending in concentric circles throughout the little world of the county or the diocese.

But is there no remedy for these evils? I do not mean, merely for the avoidance of personal perplexity, disgust, and irritation to a patron—which form but the minor and curable portion of the mischief—but for the rescue of the church from the intrusion of novices into dignities, where they are paid in advance for contingent returns of usefulness; and, further, with a view to the entire extinction of pluralities.

Part of the remedy appears to myself to be so simple, and so easily to be administered, as to be morally incapable of being rejected: Let preferment depend upon the party's AGE. Suppose, for example, that no cathedral dignity, or other sinecure, shall be obtainable till a clergyman has passed his thirty-fifth or fortieth year.

This regulation, as far as it operated, would

protect the church, as a professedly religious institution, against those who now enter it from self-interest. If the same principle were acted upon with regard to benefices, the advantage would, of course, increase in proportion to the fidelity and impartial severity by which the principle was observed.

I am fully aware that the beneficial consequence would, in itself, be only negative; but in no moral case are negations to be despised. The prevention of evil may be a positive good; for, although restraint is unproductive of virtue, it is no favourite with the vicious, since it stands in their way to the gratification of passion and appetite. At any rate, if the rule in question were brought into action, I am persuaded that the public dissatisfaction, on the score of giving ecclesiastical pensions and places for services neither done nor likely to be done, would be so far removed.

It is, at present, a general complaint, that the common and established economy of life is less regarded in the church than in any other department. Statesmen, and commanders of armies and fleets, together with civil, military, and naval veterans of all degrees, *retire* upon pensions; whereas ecclesiastics may *begin* with them. It is thence argued, that we might as consistently give a midshipman, in his first year, an admiral's com-

mand and pay, as allow a young man to be ordained to a living. I do not myself think the cases parallel; but they are stated as a rough and intelligible application of a just principle.

Alas! examples have not been wanting, where beardless and untried dignitaries have complained of preferment bestowed upon veterans, who have had the will and ability to do the church long and efficient service;—again reminding us of what Burke said to *his* youthful censor: “I challenge the Duke of Bedford as a juror, to pass upon the value of my services. I cannot recognise, in his few and idle years, the competence to judge of my long and laborious life. If I can help it, he shall not be on the inquest of my *quantum meruit*. He can hardly know any thing of public industry in its exertions, or can estimate its compensations when its work is done.” But let this pass!

Another expedient might be, the junction of sinecures with benefices in populous and laborious parishes where the income is scanty. There are large towns, with splendid churches and crowded congregations, where the incumbent’s salary does not supply house-rent, and bread and water for his family. The neighbouring village, with its five hundred inhabitants, may, at the same time, produce a clear revenue of one thousand pounds annually; the tenth part only of which is allowed

to the curate of a rector, who resides on another living, and holds a prebend in the cathedral of a distant diocese.

Apologists for these things make their own cause more desperate, by pleading for the retention of sinecures and pluralities, as so many prizes held out for clerical competitors. Are such defenders conscious of the degradation to which they reduce the church—making it a bubble company; and inviting men to take shares in it, as they might do in a canal or rail-way? In each case, the motive is precisely the same,—money; and the arrangements are managed in a manner worthy of a principle so stimulating. Shares are at a premium, or otherwise, as the share-holder's party may possess or lose influence.

This part of our discussion shall be sanctioned by the following remarks of Burke on political reforms. He writes: "The private enemies to be made in all attempts of this kind are innumerable; and their enmity will be the more bitter, and the more dangerous too, because a sense of dignity will oblige them to conceal the cause of their resentment. Very few men, of great families and extensive connections, but will feel the smart of a cutting reform, in some close relation, some bosom friend, some pleasant acquaintance, some dear protected dependant. Emolument is taken from

some ; patronage from others ; objects of pursuit from all. Men forced into an involuntary independence will abhor the authors of a blessing which, in their eyes, has so very near a resemblance to a curse. When officers are removed, and the offices remain, you may set the gratitude of some against the anger of others ; you may oppose the friends you oblige against the enemies you provoke : but services of the present sort create no attachments. The individual good felt in a public benefit is comparatively so small, comes round through such an involved labyrinth of intricate and tedious revolutions ; whilst a present personal detriment is so heavy where it falls, and so instant in its operation ; that the cold commendation of a public advantage never was, and never will be, a match for the quick sensibility of a private loss : and you may depend upon it, that, when people have an interest in railing, sooner or later they will bring a considerable degree of unpopularity upon any measure. So that, for the present at least, the reformation will operate against the reformers ; and revenge (as against them, at the least) will produce all the effects of corruption."

Every syllable of this practical and eloquent philosophy may one day be applicable to the Second Reformation, and its consequences, of the Anglican Church.

CHAPTER VI.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE WORLD'S ESTIMATE OF
ECCLESIASTICAL AFFLUENCE.

B. What nature wants, commodious gold bestows;
'Tis thus we eat the bread another sows.

P. But how unequal it bestows, observe;
'Tis thus we riot, while who sow it starve :
What nature wants (a phrase I much distrust)
Extends to luxury, extends to lust.—
The sense to value riches, with the art
T' enjoy them, and the virtue to impart ;
Not meanly, not ambitiously pursued ;
Not sunk by sloth, nor raised by servitude ;
To balance fortune by a just expense,
Join with economy magnificence,
With splendour charity, with plenty health—
Oh teach us * * * * * yet unspoil'd by wealth !

POPE.

WHILE we support a system deriving its corruption from Papal perversions of Christianity, we are yet professing to protect, against infidels and sceptics, the only religion which warns its disciples of the danger of earthly affluence and its associated distinctions. “ How hardly shall they that

have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven !”..

“ When he heard these things, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”.. “ The love of money is the root of all evil : which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things.”..

“ They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

It does not appear an easy task, at first, to account for the connection of worldly treasure with the doctrine of ONE who said to a premature convert, “ Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.” The visible church has, since his day, completely reversed this saying. Its lottery may have, as some think, few prizes ; but they are quite numerous enough to ensure the sale of all the tickets ; and each prize is an indication of an enemy’s intrusion into a kingdom not of this world.

The rich ecclesiastic finds support, also, in another department of apology. Sinecures afford literary leisure ; where one clergyman of classical attainments may prepare his new editions of Lycophron and Tacitus ; while another, devoted to a

different branch of study, may finish his treatise on the Newtonian philosophy.

But such efforts—valuable, and even necessary, as they may be in themselves, for the furtherance of literature and science—may be accomplished by men whose profession is not sacred : and there is no more religion inherent in such pursuits, than in billiards and chess. In point of fact, they convert a minister of the Gospel into a candidate for the world's favour ; while they divert his thoughts from his own and his people's salvation *.

* It has been suggested, that employment of the most honourable and beneficial kind might be found for the members of cathedral churches, if each of those establishments became a school of theology, auxiliary to the universities, for the preparation of candidates for holy orders. In the Life of Burnet we are told, that he maintained a “ small nursery of students in divinity at Salisbury, who might follow their studies, till he should be able to provide for them. They were ten in number ; to each of whom he allowed a salary of thirty pounds a-year. They were admitted to him once a day, to give an account of their progress in learning, to propose to him such difficulties as they met with in the course of their reading, and to hear a lecture from him, upon some speculative or practical point of divinity, or on some part of the pastoral function, which lasted above an hour. During the bishop's absence, the learned Dr. Whitby supplied his place, in overlooking and directing their studies. By this means, our author educated several young clergymen, who proved an honour to the church. But as this came to be considered as a present provision, with sure expectations of a future settlement, he was continually importuned, and sometimes imposed upon, as to the persons recommended to be of this number. And the foundation itself was maliciously exclaimed at, as a designed affront upon the method of educa-

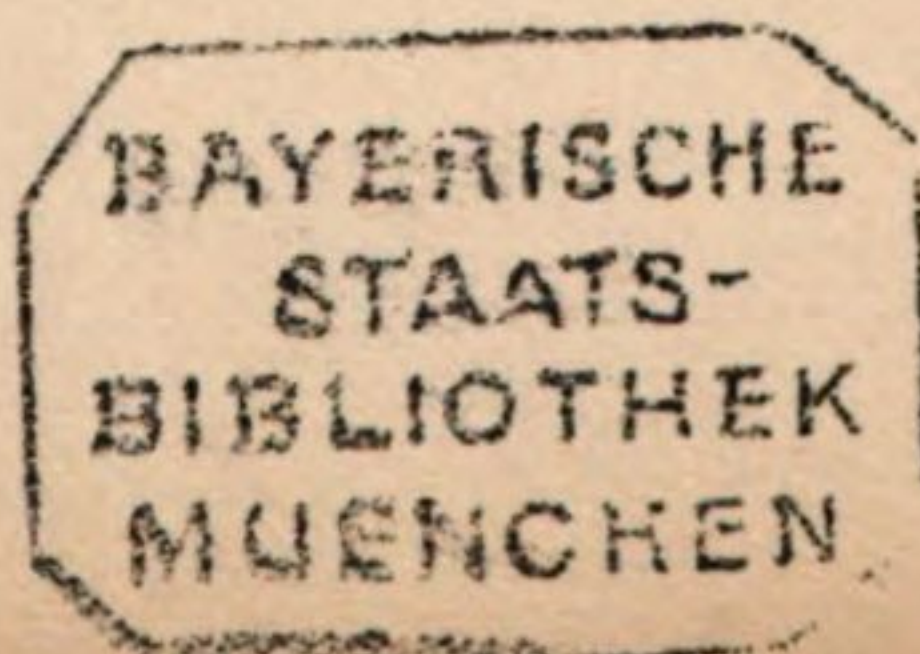
The literature of speculative theology itself has the same effect ; and the mischief is all the more insidious, from its apparent identity with religion. A divine, in the luxurious retirement of his library, may write a satisfactory refutation of some current error ; and be himself the victim of the self-same heresy in another form. An essay against Antinomianism is not the least pledge of its writer's aspirations after holiness ; and the man who publishes a remonstrance against the doctrines of the real presence, and of the *opus operatum* of the Papists, may, to every practical purpose, teach the same doctrines, by an indiscriminate administration of the sacrament to the sick.

Abstract theology is, to a clergyman, what a knowledge of the elements of mechanics is to an engineer,—the means, and only the means, by which the two professors *may* create a physical or moral force : otherwise all their wisdom remains buried in their books.

Before I proceed further, the reader's attention shall be solicited to an extract from one of our weekly periodicals. It came in my way, by mere accident, when drawing up these paragraphs ; and

tion at Oxford, so that he was prevailed upon, after some years, to lay it wholly aside."—But the scheme above proposed would be exclusively confined to the theological and pastoral instruction of young men, during the interval between leaving college and ordination.

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is inserted as a specimen of public opinion—of the width and force of the current setting in against the existing economy of the church ; and especially in reference to its accumulations of wealth, as unequally and injuriously distributed :—“ Of the three great divisions of Christianity, the Roman Catholic is chiefly addressed to the senses, and the Presbyterian to the mind. The English Episcopal is an attempt to mingle the better parts of both. It may admit of a question, whether the search after a golden mean in matters ecclesiastical has not failed ; as it has generally done in things of less importance.

“ The forms of the Episcopal church have a close resemblance to those of its Catholic progenitor ; but with the one they are types, with the other they are realities. The superstitious part of its adherents are therefore in momentary danger of falling off from Episcopacy to Romanism.

“ On the other hand, even the tolerated existence of ceremonies that are acknowledged to be non-essential, is offensive to the fanatical part of her followers ; and leads to a falling off from Episcopacy to Presbyterianism, or some one of its numerous modifications ; where religion is stripped of its comprehensible clothing, and addresses itself to the mind of the worshipper in undefined mystery and magnitude.

“The assumption by the Romanists of exclusive salvation is favourable to proselytism, and singularly contrived to keep those Catholic who have once become Catholic. The bigotry of the Presbyterians, which leads them (not indeed to damn, but) to entertain very strong doubts about the safety of those who are tainted by compliance with the ungodly rites either of Romanism or Episcopacy, gives to the Presbyterian church nearly equal advantages with the Roman.

“The door of Episcopacy stands open to all comers ; it admits proselytes with all imaginable ease ; but it lets them out as readily as it lets them in. For philosophers, for gentlemen, nothing can be more suitable than the decent comeliness of its ceremonies, the dignity of its service, the respectability of its ministers. It is the best of all possible systems for those who look on religion as a thing to be talked about at public meetings, or to be joined in once a week—if the weather be good ; and who would as little dream of making Christianity a matter of individual or family concernment, as they would of offering up prayers on the population controversy, or discussing the currency question with their wives and daughters.

“Were men religious enough to require neither guides nor instructors ; or were they irreligious enough to care for neither ; Episcopacy, which

crosses no man's path and questions no man's faith ; which, provided he pays his tithes regularly, permits him, without question or observation, to spend the remainder of his money and his time as he sees fit ; would be the most suitable, as well as the most acceptable, religion possible.

“ But, though its standing on a sort of neutral ground between Romanism and Presbyterianism is doubtless one cause why Episcopacy has fewer real friends than the others, there are other causes not less powerful.

“ Among these we have no hesitation in naming the *wealth* of the Episcopal church. We are aware, that, on an average, the livings are not extravagantly great ; but arguments from averages are generally most fallacious. The minimum of income in the Scotch church, where the average is by no means contemptible, is two hundred pounds per annum ; the maximum is not more than double the sum. The minimum of the English church is perhaps less than one hundred ; and the maximum is twenty thousand pounds !

“ What must be the consequence of thus converting clergymen into *millionnaires* and princes ? Why, that the pomp and pride, nay, the very requirements, of their order, must utterly unfit them for performing the humble duties of their calling. Ask the peasant, artisan, or small shopkeeper—

that is, ask ninety-nine hundredth parts of the community—for the character of the Established clergyman, and what will be the answer? That he wears a coat of a certain colour, a hat of a certain form, rides a good horse, dines with the 'squire, seldom misses the quarter-sessions, is a great enemy to poachers and public-houses; but, except on these topics, and now and then a tithe quarrel, he is a kindly man, and lets his parish do as they please.

“Ask the Presbyterian of *his* minister, and he will tell you of his visitations, his sermons, his prayers; he will quote you his last address; and dwell with pride on the interviews he has had with him. And if you apply for information to the Catholic, he can entertain you with tales even stranger than these.

“Do we state such circumstances in condemnation of the ministers of the Episcopal church? Far from it. The difference between their conduct and that of their brethren is no more than an accident of the wealth with which the law of the land has invested them. The Roman-Catholic priest and the Presbyterian clergyman readily sympathize with their flocks, because they are not so far lifted above the meanest as to be incapable of appreciating his feelings.

“But it is not in human nature to step with

pleasure from a Turkey carpet to a mud floor. The man who has been accustomed to wear 'fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day,' cannot communicate with the poor and the wretched: he does not know their language.

"He is admirably adapted for the companionship of the great and the wealthy; for those who wish to choose their company on the road to heaven. But for the man who labours for his daily bread; for the stranger, the way-farer, the beggar, who has no claim on the minister of religion but that he is a fellow-candidate for the same blessed immortality—to such he cannot descend; not because he wants the will, but because he knows not the way.

"This great and besetting sin of the Episcopal church is, indeed, not peculiar. Wherever livings swell into bloated proportions (it matters not what the religious creed may be), *there* does he, who should be an honest and energetic labourer, become a careless and indolent sinecurist. There is no rule of more general application, than that where an office is overpaid its duties are imperfectly performed *."

There are several minor mistakes in these strictures, which, to the intelligent reader, will readily correct themselves. It needs scarcely be added,

* Spectator, Nov. 14, 1829.

that the article—as far as internal evidence goes—could not have been compiled by a writer intimately acquainted with the genius and spirit of Christianity. On the latter account, I rather prefer its insertion; as coming from a man of the world, who is manifestly familiar with the tone of feeling prevalent among his fellows; and has none of those professional prepossessions which might unconsciously prevent certain individuals, of the purest intentions, from discerning and describing the actual state of the public mind.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INCORRECTNESS, AND ALSO JUSTICE, OF
THE PRECEDING STATEMENT—PROTESTANT
SUICIDE.

Now, Truth, perform thine office : waft aside
The curtain drawn by Prejudice and Pride.—
He lov'd the world that hated him : the tear
That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere :
Assail'd by scandal, and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life ;
And he that forg'd, and he that threw the dart,
Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbrib'd,
Were copied close in him—

COWPER.

THE representative of the public press who supplied what was transcribed in the last chapter, is guilty either of a very serious omission ; or of an act of forgetfulness, by no means to be justified by the circumstances which called forth his statements. He has entirely forgotten to state, that the Anglican division of Christianity contains a class of clergy who are precisely the reverse of their brethren, as he has pourtrayed them.

The religious section of our clergy is generally acknowledged to be the most spotless pattern on earth, of the common Head of the church universal. They administer the rites of their communion without the blind confidence of the vulgarian Papist, and the incredulous irreverence of some who wander into the contrary extreme. They admit proselytes to the privileges and consolations of the Gospel with caution, the right use of charity, and with prayers for their perseverance in the ways of godliness ; and when any of these fall back into the ranks of the world, they mourn over their aberrations, and invite them to return.

Their perpetual doctrine is, that if religion be not a personal and domestic concern, and the spring of all an individual's action, it is nothing better than infidelity in masquerade, and must infallibly terminate in the wailings and perdition of a hypocrite.

They cross every man's path ; and bid him, at his peril, pursue any one except the narrow way to life eternal ; but they utter this menace with the feelings, and in the tone, of compassion for his ignorance, helplessness, guilt, and danger.

They question, and severely scrutinize, his faith ; and bid him beware of mistaking opinions for principles, and of calling the Son of God a Saviour, while indifferent to his salvation.

They discover no neutral ground between the kingdoms of light and darkness: and, altogether, they warn their flocks of the necessity of being born again, not barely in the laver of regeneration, but of the Spirit; and they declare that this second birth is the great distinction between the sincere and faithless members of the church.

It is matter of deep gratitude to the Giver of all good, that we have prelates of high station and affluence—not quite millionnaires and princes—who muster in this tried company of the militant church. They, as well as their clerical inferiors, are kindly men, who do *not* let their dioceses and parishes do as they please.

They visit—they preach—they pray; and perform each act as servants of the Most High God, who watch for souls as they that must give account. The superstition of the Papacy, the fanaticism of the self-deceiver, and the carelessness of certain among their own brethren, are to them unknown.

I could also tell of Prelates, and of Noblemen, who can step from Turkey carpets, and from saloons flaming with purple and gold, into cabins where the mud floor is the least offensive part of the scene. They perfectly know the language of the inhabitants—all its idioms and inflections, its barbarisms and intonations.

The peasant in the field, or by the highway-side;

the wayfaring man, though a fool; the beggar; and the vagrant ruffian—none of these travellers to eternity are strangers to those who feel that they are treading the same road.

All this may be inexplicable to such a philosopher as has occasioned the present development. And, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness! The Gospel affords the only solution for this paradox; and happy they who understand it—as it only can be understood—by their own experience!

From a digression, fairly demanded by the circumstances of the case, I would return to the position at the close of my author's paper, that "where an office is overpaid, its duties are imperfectly performed."

An obvious cause of this disproportion is to be found in the fact, that an ample revenue absorbs so much time in its management, and renders necessary so large an establishment, internal and external—adding the hours consumed by the etiquette of superior station, and the influx of company—that the day of a great man is almost gone before he is aware of its arrival; and too frequently departs, never to return, without any satisfactory memorial of its existence.

To Dignitaries covetous of their time—and there

are some by no means innocent of this species of avarice—the demand made even by Christian associates is sometimes very harassing. The great business of life seems to stand still: and if some sinecurists are overpaid and become idlers, there are examples of mitred and cassocked clergymen whose labours exceed a very high degree of remuneration. These stars, however, shine in the ecclesiastical expanse *notwithstanding* the exhalations of opulence; and through which other luminaries may occasionally twinkle, but otherwise are never discoverable.

Let not these observations be interpreted as a design to bring upon the Church a deluge of pauperism. *That* topic is sufficiently alarming in connection with our lay population. If there be danger and loss to a religious institution from secular grandeur and affluence, it will derive no safety from mere poverty. There is no natural connection between religion and beggary. As far as my own observation goes, I have seen exactly as much pride—I do not say more, but as much; since I believe in the general equality of sin among mankind—in cottages, as in the mansions of the great. All the difference resided in accidents.

We want here, as every where else, a medium between two opposing sources of temptation. It

should also be remembered, that a clergyman's income is, in part, vested in him as trustee for his indigent parishioners ; but no such trust is created, if his receipts are all absorbed by his own wants.

But while we are quietly indulging in these visions of perfection, the crowd out of doors are clamorous for *some* reform of the church's finances.

A fertile cause of further dissatisfaction has developed itself, in relation to the proceedings of Government respecting the new churches. The payers of ecclesiastical dues allege, that they are called upon to discharge three compulsory debts, and many others which can scarcely be considered as optional. These are, first, the tithes, including surplice-fees ; then, the church-rates ; and thirdly, a share in the taxes, whence are advanced the millions paid to the commissioners.

After these appears, occasionally, a king's letter, instead of the obsolete briefs. In many cases, and added to the above payments, contributions are solicited in behalf of stipendiary curates, whose salaries are inadequate to the most moderate wants.

Then comes a variety of subscriptions for the repairs, decoration, lighting, and warming of churches ; for organs and organists ; for gratuities to inferior officers, and to the widows of clergy ;

exclusive of further demands for schools and charities, in some way connected with the Establishment. All this is more or less expected, in the shape of voluntary aid.

There are also numerous instances where an additional tax is levied—if not a *repetition* of all those enumerated—by the circumstance of the mother-church being over-peopled. The parishioner, thus excluded, is compelled to pay for a pew in an auxiliary chapel, or otherwise absent himself altogether from Divine worship. This is the case, also, where property is divided, and occasions the erection of new houses.

Under the present system, also, may frequently arise examples, where clerical liberality repays itself with usurious interest. The incumbent, for instance, of a valuable living subscribes £500 towards the erection of a district church in his own over-peopled parish; and a laudatory report of the donation goes the usual round of the newspapers. But the new church, by becoming part of his preferment, is given to a son, or dependant; who receives from the rent of the seats an annuity far beyond the interest of the original benefaction. This regular addition to the Establishment resembles the speculation connected with a proprietary chapel; while the latter is not obnoxious

to the public, since it involves no interests beyond those of a single adventurer, and his voluntary associates*.

Upon schemes of this character the attention of mankind is now fixed with a certain steadiness, if not malignity, of gaze, which it may be impossible to divert, otherwise than by proving that the friends of the Church are determined to apply resources already in their possession to purposes of actual utility.

* Since the above was written I observed the following remarks in a periodical:—"We have no objection to the late increase in the number of churches, but we are perfectly convinced that in a large variety of instances they were totally unnecessary. If we look into any of the large churches of London, or of the country, in the afternoon or evening, we find almost a solitude. The fifty London churches do not average fifty persons a-piece. The country churches, except in the instance of some peculiarly popular preacher, or some singularly zealous clergyman, have seldom in the evening any beyond a few paupers, and a charity school. In point of exterior, the new churches are generally among the very worst specimens of the arts. As to patronage, they are generally turned into snug sinecures for the sons or nephews, or daughters' husbands, or nieces' husbands, or some still lower dependant, of the rector. Of course a good deal of canvassing is to have them built wherever the rector is plagued with those dependants; and the parishes, already overwhelmed with poor-rates and taxes, are burdened to make a provision for the hangers-on. This, we could pledge ourselves, has been the secret history of the transaction in a crowd of instances; and all this waste, jobbery, and sinecureism might have been avoided, by the obvious method of inducing the morning congregation to divide itself, and find the evening service as accurately and attentively performed as the morning."

I should not have inserted these strictures, had they not appeared in a publication attached to the Church. For the accuracy of the alleged facts its editor is alone responsible.

It is, thence, a question deserving very serious investigation, whether a portion of sinecure and of cathedral estates should not be applied to the support of the Church, by adding it to the fund already in the hands of the commissioners. The measure would properly tend to allay the public irritation; and would coincide with one great object of the hierarchy,—the provision of opportunities for religious worship among our increasing population.

Neither would such proceeding in the least interfere with vested rights; as the estate, for example, of a prebendary, or other sinecurist, would not be appropriated to the church-building fund until his death.

The system might, further, secure the Establishment from secular spoliation, by devoting its surplus revenue to religious purposes. And in proportion as the scheme was carried into effect would the Church be strengthened, not only by the diffusion of its influence, but by that honourable kind of popularity which is consequent upon acts of genuine patriotism*.

* About forty years ago, certain prebends in the cathedral of Lichfield were abolished, and their proceeds applied to the repair and decoration of the fabric. After the fire at York minster it was proposed to pursue a correspondent plan, in the restoration of the choir.—If these things are allowable for the mere shells of the Establishment, why should not the *salaries of indigent clergymen* be augmented by similar measures?

The opportunity, indeed, which the execution of such a project would afford to the dignified members of the Establishment, of discovering their anxiety and zeal for its perpetuity and extension, would correspond with their ability to make sacrifices for its advantage. If men of the world are forced upon measures of good, as compulsory acts of caution and safety, men of higher principles find self-inflicted pain in a righteous cause to be ultimately a source of pleasure.

They sometimes feel conscious of possessing wealth and rank which burden them with all the perplexities of money and high station; while their eminence robs them of the tranquillity enjoyed in the vale of life, and at a distance from display and luxury.

Examples are not wanting, where splendid preferment has been refused; and, when afterwards accepted, followed by much internal disquietude, and by a regret that its possessor ever became entangled in its silken snares. Bishop Burnet fluttered in this net, and has left a posthumous confession and complaint of the embarrassments of his situation. He says,—“ I wish the pomp of living, and the keeping high tables, could be quite taken away: it is a great charge, and no very decent one; a great devourer of time; it lets in much

promiscuous company, and much vain discourse : even civility may carry us too far, and make us too like the rest of the world. It was, indeed, one of the greatest burdens of my life to see so much time lost, to hear so much idle talk, and to be living in a luxurious waste of that which might have been much better bestowed. I had not strength enough to break through that which custom has imposed on those provided with plentiful bishoprics."

Should the affairs of the Church undergo an equitable revision, much of this evil may be neutralized. The whole system may be modified as was wished by our Reformers, who received an untimely check in their correction of Papal abuses ; and who were earnest for a far more complete imitation of the model of the New Testament, than was allowed by a Princess aiming, as it would appear, to render the Gospel itself subservient to her personal and political ambition.

And here, our present recurrence to the days when the Papal Antichrist domineered over this empire, too forcibly reminds us of the shifts and inconsequential logic to which we are driven, when we venture to measure our strength with the Bellarmines and Bossuets of the *old religion*.

The Society for Promoting Christian Know-

ledge issued a very impressive tract*, prepared by the Rev. Blanco White, but—judging from internal evidence—revised and modified by others, containing the following parable:—“The people of two neighbouring islands, which acknowledged the authority of the same sovereign, received each a governor from the metropolis. One of the governors presented himself with his commission in one hand, and with the book of the colonial laws in the other. ‘Gentlemen,’ he said, ‘here is the king’s commission, which authorizes me to govern you according to these laws. I will direct my officers to get them printed, and every one of you shall have a copy in his possession. If ever any one of you should think that I am stepping beyond my powers, or governing against the laws, he may examine the point, and consult his friends about it; and if, after all, he feels inclined not to be under me any longer, I will not at all molest him in his removal to the neighbouring island, carrying away every thing that belongs to him.’ The other governor pursued quite a different course. He appeared in the capital with all the pomp and show of a king.

* “*The Poor Man’s Preservative against Popery*.” Much of the citation in the text is confessed to be exclusively applicable to the Papists; but the argument is throughout vitiated by its being convertible to the uses of another party.

He gave out, that he had authority from the sovereign, not only to govern according to the standing laws, but to make new statutes at his will and pleasure. At the same time, he employed his officers to deprive the people of all the copies of the colonial laws that were to be found, and published heavy penalties against any one who should possess or read them without his leave, or in a copy which had not his own interpretation of the statutes. Some high-spirited individuals presented a petition to the new governor, stating, 'that they were perfectly willing and ready to obey any one commissioned by their king; but, still, they conceived themselves entitled to possess a copy of the laws of the country;—that, if the monarch himself had empowered him to make additional laws, they would make no objection to that, provided he shewed an authentic copy of his commission.' The governor grew quite furious upon reading this remonstrance, and answered, that he would not shew any document relating to his power of making new laws; that the king had conferred upon him this privilege, not in writing, but by a message; and, finally, that if the petitioners did not obey him in silence, he would employ force against them.—'Do, sir, but prove to us your commission from the king, and we are ready to obey without a murmur.'—'Take those

fellows,' said the governor, 'and let them die by fire.'—The order being executed, a number of citizens tried to escape from the island ; but troops were stationed at every port and creek, and such as were found in the act of getting away were, without mercy, put to the sword, or confined in dungeons till they swore that they would receive whatever the governor commanded as if it had been a part of the book of the laws. To complete the picture of this governor, I will tell you, that there was not one among the laws which he added to the written statutes of the colonies but evidently procured both to him and to his officers an increase of wealth and power."

In this extract, the governor of the first island is meant to personate the Protestant church, or rather its Anglican division ; and by the book of colonial laws is meant the Bible. But the parallel scarcely runs an inch further. The governor, as representative of an established and affluent church, ought to say, "He shall *not* carry away every thing that belongs to him, but shall be compelled to pay a large sum towards the support of my government."

In fact, it is *he* who appears with all the pomp and show of a king, and gives out that he has authority to make new statutes at his will and pleasure. He also allows none to read the colo-

nial code without his own interpretation. By this commentary, also, he and his officers evidently procure great wealth and power. In other words, the Church says, "If you will not take the interpretation of the Scriptures from the Prayer-book, and also in all ceremonial points conform to the Establishment, not a shilling shall you have of the millions it possesses."

In another part of the pamphlet, the Protestant apologist argues, that the Bishop of Rome contrives to make his religion a perpetual source of wealth; and he then says,—“Here again the comparison between the Pope and the Protestant clergy is enough to decide any rational man in doubt what church to follow. Any one, who is capable of making the comparison, will clearly perceive, that, on whatever points the Church of Rome and the Protestant Churches (especially ours of England) agree, the Scriptures are their common foundation: but as soon as they begin to disagree, the Church of Rome is seen striving after wealth and power in the articles which she adds to the Scriptures; while the Protestant clergy evidently relinquish both emolument and influence, by their refusal to follow the Romanists beyond the authority of the word of God.”

One might suppose, from such a strain of argument, that it is only the Church of Rome which

strives after wealth and power ; and that the logician is wandering into bitter irony, when he talks of those who evidently relinquish both emolument and influence.

It is, in reality, the religionist who has *no* legal, *no* compulsory, claim upon his neighbour's purse, and who, if a teacher, says to his adherents nothing more than they themselves agreed to when they joined his party—*this* is the man who takes no shares in an endowed church ; although he himself *must* discharge all ecclesiastical dues, as well as pay his portion towards the expenses of an unestablished communion. The eulogy, therefore, of this apologist ought to be restored to its right owner, who turns out to be a Non-conformist ;—a most embarrassing discovery, it must be owned, to the party concerned in the circulation of the “*Preservative against Popery !*”

What are Bishop Marsh's eighty-seven questions, and also his pamphlets on the danger of distributing the Bible without the Prayer-book, but *heavy penalties* published against candidates for holy orders, and all such persons as study the Colonial Code without additions and interpretations ? And does this Prelate evidently relinquish emolument and influence at Peterborough and Cambridge, by his refusal to follow the Romanists beyond the authority of the Scriptures--bearing

always in mind his lordship's scepticism about the authenticity of the Apocalypse?

Alas! while we are trifling in this manner, and supposing that we can hide our deformities behind the screen of a self-interested sophistry, the metaphysical infidel and the frivolous libertine may discern, with equal clearness, that such a subterfuge is *not* the religion of the New Testament. In fact, the discovery may be made, and is made, at a glance. It requires no powers of penetration; although the sight itself may cause the unbeliever to mutter dark expressions of hatred and revenge; while the man of pleasure contents himself with a momentary laugh and sneer, and passes on to the nearest revelry.

CHAPTER VIII.

ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE.

With you must reformation first take place :
 You are the head, the intellectual mind
 Of this vast body politic, whose base
 And vulgar limbs, to drudgery consign'd,
 All the rich stores of science have resign'd
 To you, that, by the craftman's various toil,
 The sea-worn mariner, and sweating hind,
 In peace and affluence maintain'd the while—
 You, for yourselves and them, may dress the mental soil.

GILBERT WEST.

THE regulations of every human institution are made on a consideration of the persons who are likely to seek access to its immunities : and these rules are always the more cautious and severe, in proportion as their framers expect a great and mixed body of applicants for admission.

Look at the rules of any Friendly Society, although established in the most obscure village of the empire ; and observe the provisions made with a view to such persons as may be received as

members. Every syllable of the laws is weighed, and protected against the possibilities of perversion; and the scheme is altogether constructed as though it were meant for the security of the society's treasury against swindlers, or the attacks of open violence.

So much aware, also is the Legislature, of this liability to abuse, that special Acts of Parliament have passed in order to impart public strength to private arrangements, and to defend a *friendly* institution from its many and insidious foes. So ineffective, also, have been previous Acts for this purpose, that last session Government supplied a new instrument of safety, in the person of a barrister, who is appointed to revise the concerns of the establishments in question, and afford them additional security, influence, and utility.

Why all this elaborate caution? and why are all kinds of legal instruments drawn up with such minute and wearisome detail? Because men feel the involution of self-interest with these arrangements. They are afraid of each other. *Homo homini lupus*. While they resent imputations of universal depravity, they nevertheless take care to act most decidedly on the very principle, which they had previously derided as absurd, and spurned away as insulting. They are, in the first instance, indignant at being called dishonest; and then pro-

ceed to exert all their energies to prevent spoliation.

The world, in fact, knows the necessity and value of DISCIPLINE; and every Bill for the enclosure of a waste or the construction of a railway is an evidence of the suspicious prudence of mankind in dealing with their brethren.

How is it, that, in a thousand examples, an apparently wanton and gratuitous neglect of the most common rules of good government characterizes the proceedings of the visible church? The shadows of time are treated as realities—the substances of eternity as uncertain and evanescent.

No regulations are so ambiguous and equivocal, so open to evasion, so capable of abuse, so remotely connected with punishment in cases of violation, as those of ecclesiastical doctrine and discipline. In this view, if our own Establishment be not a rope of sand or of gossamer, its tenacity is scarcely within the limits of definition.

We shall, indeed, encounter at this point a remark, abraded by long and constant use, that all human institutions are imperfect. Behind this truism many good men are fain to hide themselves, when perplexed by arguments which they feel themselves unable to answer; while it also affords shelter to fugitives of another character,—to men who plainly discern evils capable of a remedy, but

which, if administered, would diminish their own revenues and importance.

I am not quite so ignorant, I hope, of human nature, neither of the peculiarities of Christianity, as to dream of framing the discipline of the church according to the severe accuracy attempted in certain examples of worldly policy. But I do plead, that the very least which we can effect for the prosperity of the Christian cause is, to establish a *negative* reformation; and where we cannot create good, to build a high and strong fence against evil.

To such as complain of what they judge to be an undue repetition of the utility of a system of negations, it may be expedient to reply, that every one allows the wide distinction between a busy and pertinacious enemy always bent upon mischief, and a neutral by-stander, who never embarrasses us by interference. “He that is not against us,” under such circumstances, “is on our part.”

The doctrine of preceding chapters, concerning the accumulation of ecclesiastical affluence, sinecures, and the distribution of preferment among novices, has a direct tendency to purify our discipline; by preventing the intrusion into the Church, of men who become the ostensible servants of God solely for the sake of gain. They aspire to earn the wages of the world, in the shape of a

religious remuneration. But if the expectation of such candidates were at once damped, by a code of regulations destructive of the present system of abuse, it is obvious that the Church would be so far defended from pollution—it would be a negative reformation.

We could not, it is allowed, ensure the substitution and succession of disinterested and spotless aspirants ; but, up to this point, we should do all which the case required. It would be a prohibitory law ; similar, for example, to the commandment “Thou shalt not steal ;” although that precept has not the least power to furnish principles of honesty.

The criminal jurisprudence of our own country is constructed on precisely the same principle.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONNECTION OF DISCIPLINE WITH THE
BAPTISMAL, BURIAL, AND EUCHARISTIC
SERVICES.

I am more apprehensive than ever of the great use and need of ecclesiastical discipline ; and what a sin it is in the pastors of the church to make no distinction, but by bare names and sacraments, and to force all the unmeet, against their own wills, to church-communion and sacraments ; and what a great dishonour to Christ it is, when the church shall be as vicious as Pagan and Mahometan assemblies, and shall differ from them only in ceremony and name.—BAXTER.

A VERY powerful source of protection against avoidable evil would be the re-construction of a considerable portion of our liturgical services on a principle of *neutrality*—in relation, I mean, to the spiritual character of the party immediately implicated in their administration.

I will endeavour to illustrate this by the initiatory ordinance of Baptism, as practised in the Church of England. The office begins with prayer for the regeneration of the infant, and assumes

nothing in favour of the child, or its sponsors, till the minister addresses the latter as follows :—
 “Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that He will favourably receive this present infant; that He will embrace him with the arms of his mercy; that He will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of His everlasting kingdom. Wherefore, we being thus persuaded of the good will of our Heavenly Father towards this infant, declared by his Son Jesus Christ; and nothing doubting but that he favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours, in bringing this infant to holy baptism”——and then he proceeds to prayer.

Now, in all this there is a direct assumption of the religious sincerity of every person attendant on the ceremony. “*Doubt ye not,*”—“*earnestly believe,*” are terms addressed to the sponsors: “*we being thus persuaded,*”—“*nothing doubting,*” are expressions including both minister and sponsors: while the remaining portions of the address suppose the infant’s acceptance.

That this mode of conducting the baptismal rite is essential to its efficacy, no one will allege; and therefore no injury to the baptized party could arise from its omission or modification. As it now stands, it may be very defensible on the theory that every sponsor has an unhesitating and earnest

faith ; that every minister possesses an equal confidence ; and that both parties are unconscious of the least doubt.

If we go further in the Service, we find similar assumptions ; and, finally, a solemn act of thanksgiving for the infant's regeneration, adoption, and incorporation into the mystical church. The whole proceeds on the presumption above described.

But is it impossible—would it not, rather, be comparatively easy—to re-construct the Service so as neither to assume nor deny the religious sincerity of the persons implicated ?

“ If,” said Philip to the Ethiopian—“ if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized.” Here was the cautionary preposition guarding the abuse of the ceremony ; and in a case, also, where it seemed to be needless, from the previous manner and conversation of the applicant—to say nothing of the probability, that Philip knew, by immediate inspiration, the candidate's internal character. On another occasion St. Peter said, “ Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ;”—no assumption of their sincerity ; but a call to repentance, and to baptism consequent upon repentance.

The discipline of the Church, as I should argue, would receive no little reform, if the same neu-

trality were observed throughout all our services, as far—for I am fully aware that the principle of alteration must be limited in its operations—as the simplicity of truth would dictate.

The perpetual embarrassment, and frequently the very serious distress, felt by conscientious clergymen in reading the Burial Service, might be removed by an application of the neutralizing principle. And in this case, the evil in question—the assumption of the party's religious sincerity—is perfectly gratuitous ; since the interment of the dead, in itself, has no necessary connection with religion. It is merely brought into such connection by human arrangements.

If one of my parishioners should be killed this evening in a drunken quarrel, I shall be compelled in a few days verbally to include my own gratitude to God with that of the drunkard's family and friends, in these words :—"We give Thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world ; beseeching Thee that it may please Thee, of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom." But, in point of fact, I am astounded at the terrible reality that the man was cut off, in a moment, in the very act of sin ; that he was hurried away from the miseries and guilt of a wicked life,

into miseries yet greater ; that he died without the possibility of repentance : and I found on such a death a prayer that God would complete the number of his elect !

If another parishioner dies what Dr. Young calls a “ slow-sudden death ”—that is, after a life spent in the decent and decorous idolatry of the world—and tells me, within twelve hours of his dissolution, that he is conscious of no guilt, and ready for his last reckoning ; or, that he has constructed a firm hope of salvation out of his own innocence and merit, mingled with the virtue of his Saviour’s sacrifice ; I bury also this man with the same expression of gratitude. But my heart tells me, while I utter the act of thanksgiving, how much I wished his continuance in this present life,—that his day of grace might have been lengthened !

Why cannot this laceration of spiritual feelings be healed, by such a negative or neutral restoration of discipline as would forbid the liturgy of a Christian church to indulge precisely the same hopes over the graves of the reprobate and the elect ; or over Chartres and Leighton, Bellingham and Perceval, Despard and George the Third.

Divines write remonstrances against Antinomianism, and what they call the dangerous doctrine of justification by faith ; but our perils

are nearer home. In proportion as a ritual makes no distinction between the sound and unsound members of a church, do bad men presume upon their safety.

A late writer on our general subject observes, with regard to the canonizing expressions in the Burial Service, that “the generality of the lower orders are apt to think that they apply to each case over whose remains they are used. They thus contribute to the too prevalent notion, that every deceased person—at least, every person who has not enjoyed much of the good things of this world—is, as a matter of course, gone to a better place. Some, when they hear them read over men who were notorious sinners, and of whose repentance no evidence had been given, derive from them encouragement to continue in sin: and others, who are more disposed to exercise their reason, consider the use of these expressions as implying a disregard for truth and holiness in the church and her ministers. I wish that some alteration could be made in the prayer where the minister says, ‘We give thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world.’ Do the feelings, the *real* sentiments, of the mourning friends of the deceased correspond, in a majority of cases, with this expression of thankfulness? It is well if they have brought not only their reason,

but their affections, to a temper of meek resignation and submission to the Divine will. It may be easy to convince *the reason*, that 'in every thing we should give thanks;' but an address to the Almighty should proceed from the *heart*, and should not be made in words to which *as yet* the heart cannot respond. I wish that this expression of thanks could be changed into an expression of, or prayer for, *resignation*; and that the prayer to God, 'shortly to accomplish the number of his elect,' &c. were altered into a prayer for readiness to die; 'that we, who survive, in this and like daily spectacles of mortality may see how frail and uncertain our own condition is, and may so number our days as to apply our hearts to heavenly wisdom,' &c." *

Leaving these remarks to the reader's consideration, I am very far from pleading, as some have done, for the omission of certain clauses in the Burial Service over the biers of notorious offenders; because I would not have any thing left to the discretion of the officiating minister. We must not make the wisest men judges of character. He who knew perfectly the human heart said, of the wheat and the tares, "Let both grow together until the harvest; and in *the time of harvest* I will say to the reapers"—for he not only

* London Review, Art. III.

postpones the hour of division, but reserves the act of separation for beings of a higher order than men—"Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." For "the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels." The entire of my own objection lies against the practical conversion of the tares into wheat, treating them both with equal honour.

The proper intent of a religious ceremony at the grave has nothing to do with the dead: it is for the survivors: and if the wicked friends and relations of a departed profligate hear a minister canonize the companion of their guilty hours, they are encouraged to pursue their own courses, and to think that all will be made up at last.

On the other hand, when the religious neighbours and relations of such a person attend his funeral, every expression, which administers false comfort to his impious associates, is as a dagger to *their* hearts: they feel with bitter poignancy the contrast between the man's life, and the words pronounced after his death.

We may view the subject also in another way, by asking the plain question, Does a *religious* man feel the least wish that any thing like posthumous commendation should be uttered upon *his* grave? What reply would have been given to this inquiry

by Usher, by Leighton, and by the Prelate who began his last will and testament thus,—“I, Joseph Hall, not worthy to be called Bishop of Norwich!”

There is yet another head of investigation connected with this topic. The Athanasian Creed declares, “Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly!” How many of those whom we bury have done this—have even understood the phraseology of the symbol? What minister ever examined a sick man, whether he confounded the Persons or divided the Substance? Such questions instantaneously furnish their own answers; and prove to what a dilemma we are driven, when we try to symmetrize our ritual, by identifying the consistent and perfect Athanasian with the poor reprobate, who lived all his years in forgetfulness of God, and died at last in the ingrained ignorance of impenitence and unbelief!

If the principle of neutrality be violated in the instances already adduced, the discipline of the Church is yet more disregarded by the rubrics connected with the administration of the Eucharist.

In one of these, subjoined to the Communion Office, it is directed that “every parishioner shall communicate at the least three times in the year, of which Easter to be one.” An indiscriminate

invitation is thus held out, militating against that principle of selection which especially ought to regulate every circumstance connected with the sacrament in question.

In the rubrics prefixed to the Communion Service it is, indeed, directed, that if any be “an open and notorious evil-liver, or have done any wrong to his neighbours by word or deed, so that the congregation be thereby offended, the curate, having knowledge thereof, shall call him, and advertise him that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord’s table until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented.” This is an effort towards discipline which, as far as I ever heard, was never acted upon ; and is never likely to be, from its complexity, and from the known unwillingness of mankind to meddle with their neighbours’ concerns when they affect religion.

But, besides this, the regulation directly operates against the *purity* of discipline, by establishing a low and worldly standard ; by telling the church to refuse the sacrament to men who deserve to be sent to the tread-mill, or to be transported for life.

Such a rule, also, is most unhappily favourable to the self-complacency of those who think themselves righteous, and therefore worthy communicants ; because *they* are not open and notorious

evil-livers, and have not offended the congregation by indictable crimes.

The rubric, in reality, passes over what may be equally perilous to salvation,—a life of decent worldliness, and of an external and conventional morality, springing from no Christian motive; the soul being absorbed in the love of money, and impatient of being awakened out of its delusions by the preaching of Christ crucified; which, under all similar circumstances, is still a stumbling-block and foolishness.

In another division of the rubric, the minister is instructed to refuse the sacrament to candidates “betwixt whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign; not suffering them to be partakers of the Lord’s table until he know them to be reconciled. And if one of the parties, so at variance, be content to forgive from the bottom of his heart all that the other hath trespassed against him, and to make amends for that he himself hath offended; and the other party will not be persuaded to a godly unity, but remain still in his frowardness and malice; the minister in that case ought to admit the penitent person to the holy communion, and not him that is obstinate.”

By this regulation is imposed a difficulty such as no clergyman, who has had any knowledge of

mankind, is prepared to meet. It supposes him to be a discerner of spirits ; to be possessed of an intuitive acquaintance with the human heart, so as to distinguish sincerity from pretence.

If it be perfectly easy for a novice, and superficial observer, to be satisfied by smooth and unmeaning declarations about forgiveness ; it is exactly the reverse in the case of a minister who, from the study of his own heart, compared with the doctrine of Scripture, and with the notorious hypocrisy of mankind, knows how impossible it is to judge on such occasions.

It would appear from this singular effort towards purity of discipline, that, while nothing is so loose and nugatory as the general system of the Church in regard to the distinction between its sound and unsound members, *here* is an example of attempting, and even of enjoining, such a strictness of discipline as is impossible to be observed ; and which is a solitary deviation from general laxity into another extreme.

Should it be alleged, that if two men quarrel, and one of them assures the minister that he has forgiven the other party—If this assurance is looked upon as satisfactory, and indeed as the only evidence of sincerity which can be expected ; I only ask, whether you would be satisfied by a similar act of sincerity in any case where your

worldly interests are concerned? Will you take a man's word in proof of his integrity? Will you trust a detected rogue with your purse, on his profession of sorrow and shame, and on his promise never to offend again? Can you *perceive* his reformation, and that *from the bottom of his heart he is penitent*?

In asking these questions, I am pleading for no unattainable caution and inviolable safeguard; neither for any unfeeling and cruel severity of discipline, inconsistent with a compassionate regard for the misery and guilt of my fellow-sinners. *All* I desiderate is this: Let us use the same prudence, and exercise the same common sense, in ecclesiastical discipline, as we do in the usual arrangements of society. Let us treat man as man in *every* case; and defend ourselves from our own errors, wilfulness, and deliberate offences, with at least an equality of caution in things temporal and eternal.

CHAPTER X.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ECCLESIASTICAL
AND CIVIL DISCIPLINE, IN EVIDENCE TO
CHARACTER.

It is time to have done with that senseless cant of charity, which insults the understandings, and trifles with the feelings, of those who are really concerned for the happiness of their fellow-creatures. True charity is wakeful, fervent, full of solicitude, full of good offices; not so easily satisfied; not so ready to believe that every thing is going on well as a matter of course; but jealous of mischief, apt to suspect danger, and prompt to extend relief. These are the symptoms by which genuine regard will manifest itself in a wife or a mother, in the case of the *bodily* health of the object of her affections. And where there is any real concern for the *spiritual* interests of others, it is characterized by the same infallible marks.—WILBERFORCE.

ON topics so unspeakably serious, it may be one of my own instances of inconsistency to wish that the pencil of Hogarth, and the pen of Crabbe, had been employed on a tale, which I here copy, as an apposite illustration of the subjects under examination. It is taken from a recent—but far too lenient—criticism on Warton's "Death-bed Scenes

and Conversations;”—a work, in my opinion, extremely injurious to the cause it professes to serve, and likely, from the peculiar nature of its popularity, to occasion diffusive evil.—“A doctor of divinity adopted, point by point, the sacramentarian practice of Dr. Warton*. On the death of

* The copyist of the extract in the text is thankful to observe, in the Bishop (Sumner) of Chester's Primary Charge, the following statement:—

“Even among those who are communicants, I find a custom prevailing which is very far from satisfactory: that of attending the Sacrament on the great Festivals of Christmas or Easter, and at no other time. This looks too much as if the Sacrament were considered as a duty to be performed, or a rite to be observed, only; and not as the habitual practice of a Christian, by which his faith were to be maintained in continual exercise. Such a custom is a sort of practical acknowledgment that men are desirous of the benefit of the Gospel as far as it can be obtained by compliance with a form, but that they do not possess the spirit, and will not submit to the obligation, of Christians. It is very needful, when we insist upon the Sacrament, either publicly or privately, to place it in its proper light, as the test of a Christian state of mind: and it might tend to remove a remnant of Popery which still exists too generally, if the Sacrament were never urged upon the sick, or even administered to them, without much consideration, unless they have been previously communicants. The withholding it will seldom be felt as a serious evil, unless the object of the Sacrament itself is misunderstood; and if its object is misunderstood, it is far better that it should be withheld. The temporary consolation of which a few, who may be really entitled to such consolation, will thus be deprived, is of far less consequence than the perpetuation of an error and an abuse, which there is reason to fear has been the ruin of multitudes.”—*Appendix*, No. I.

The latter portion of this timely and faithful remonstrance, exposing the antinomian system so generally practised in the chambers of the sick, will be a warning, it is hoped, not dis-

his tithe agent, and while he was perplexed by the difficulty of supplying what he considered to be an all but irreparable loss, he was one evening called to the sick-bed of an infidel and libertine attorney, resident in the parish, and an active opponent of every scheme of good bearing the impress of Christianity. The rector found him apparently in great danger and pain ; but left him, at the end of a long interview, in a state ostensibly approaching to remorse for his wicked life, and not indisposed to discuss with his pastor the evidences of Revelation.

“ The doctor returned home with feelings of opening satisfaction ; and in the course of the week unveiled, in various domestic circles throughout the parish, as well as at home, the prospects of his coming triumph. This was done with unusual self-complacency : for, as he every where declared, *the bird was well worth all his powder and shot.*

“ To the attorney, therefore, he repeated his visits daily for a fortnight : during which period the patient seemed to make rapid progress towards

obeyed by many, who have hitherto been deluded by fictitious details ; which are still, alas ! borrowed from the realities of practice among formalists and abusers of a Christian sacrament.

conversion. At the termination of the second fortnight, the rector considered his transformation to be complete; and, as the invalid was yet confined to his chamber, his spiritual adviser recommended, or rather enjoined, an immediate reception of the Sacrament.

“The sick man hinted at unfitness; but his pastor replied, ‘Away, my good sir, with all scruples: I have had every proof of your sincerity which I could possibly wish or expect; and I have no doubt but that on your recovery—and you are now rapidly convalescent—you will be an example to the whole parish, in consistent piety and virtue; as well as a regular communicant, and constant attendant at church; and that your first business in your library will be to weed out the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau, and commit all such rubbish to the flames.’—Accordingly, the Sacrament was administered; and ‘a thousand tokens of devotion’ were visible in the new communicant.

“Ten days afterwards, the attorney returned to his office; and wrote his first letter, in the form of an application to the rector for the vacant situation of the late tithe-agent; and for which no one could deny his fitness, as he was an excellent man of business, and perfectly conversant with the localities of the parish. In fact, his pastor had

said, three months before, that he was the very man for his purpose, except that no dependence could be placed upon his principles.

“The application was not only rejected, but rejected in terms evidently implying surprise. And when the circumstance was mentioned by the rector, the same day, to a large party of his friends, after dinner, there was a simultaneous burst of astonishment at what was then termed the assurance of the man, who dared to propose himself as a confidential solicitor, when it was notorious that six months had not elapsed since he had swindled his own brother out of a legacy; though protected, by the letter of the law, from any subsequent prosecution.

“The doctor, at the head of the table, joined in the outcry of his friends; and, in the hilarity of the moment, proposed an ironical toast, intended to satirize *the honest attorney*.

“But observe the sequel. The rector had formally pronounced the integrity of this very man, and almost compelled him to set his eucharistic seal to a covenant between himself and his Redeemer, as a convert recently and triumphantly added to the church of Christ:—yet this same authenticated believer was now discovered to be utterly unfit to be trusted with the management of his accreditor's affairs!

“The lawyer quickly marked the rector’s anomalous conduct ; and exercised but a small portion of the shrewdness he really possessed, when, in the course of an after-correspondence, he asked his pastor, how he could reconcile his rejection of the *agent* with his acceptance of the *Christian*?

“From this dilemma there was no possible escape. The rector had only a choice of difficulties. If the man were sincere in reference to God, he was certainly worthy of human confidence : if he were insincere, how came his confessor to give him virtual absolution ? In either case, the sacramentarian and credulous system discovered its inconsistency and confusedness.

“How the story ended is not to our purpose. But it is obvious, that, if common sense were suffered to guide men in the concerns of religion, we might have been spared the trouble of shewing that a divine may possess two rules of conduct, entirely contradictory to each other ; one of them subservient to his theological prejudices ; and the other compelling him to disclaim the moral pretensions of an individual whom he had recently admitted, as a sound disciple, to the privileges of Christianity*.”

The essence of this story is, that Dr. Warton’s

* Christian Observer, 1827, p. 755.

clerical disciple signed a man's certificate for heaven, but refused to do it for this world: he was good enough for entering into covenant with God, but could not be trusted with a shilling of his rector's money!

Few things, as is too well known, occasion such distress in private life as the misconduct of servants; and a penalty is, by Act of Parliament, incurred by every householder who gives a *false character*. Alas! where our domestic comforts, personal safety, and general prosperity are involved, we are all anxious to separate the chaff from the wheat; and in the communications which pass between a menial's last master and ourselves, all the arts of caution are employed to defend our families against the new comer.

It would be considered to be a high insult, to recommend a groom discharged for embezzlement in the stables, to a neighbouring gentleman, with a note expressive of a *hope* that *this our brother* leaves the scene of his fraud an honest and trusty man. And suppose that the recommender repeats his repulsed hope with a suggestion that the man ought to be received, as a reformed character, *in the judgment of charity*, no matter what facts were against him, and although four-and-twenty hours ago he was selling oats out of his master's gra-

nary, and boasting of his exploits to the partners of his crime !

Yet when this man stands as sponsor next Sunday, I tell him *not to doubt*, but *earnestly believe*, in terms exclusively applicable to sound and consistent Christians. The same individual is commanded to communicate thrice a year. If he be sick, he may require the Sacrament. If he die, I am to be thankful for his dissolution. In all these cases, I am to treat him exactly as I would treat a veteran in the service of Jesus Christ, who had shone for a long life as a light of the world, and died at last full of joy and peace in believing.

A principle of *neutrality* might remove all that could be removed of the confusion and mischief thus occasioned. We cannot, indeed, construct a liturgy which may, with equal consistency, be used by the successors of St. John and of Judas Iscariot. But we can do this—forebear gratuitous assumptions in favour of a wicked man. We can do more,—frame services and addresses containing warnings against self-deceivers. Sponsors might be addressed in the language of caution and admonition ; catechumens, as having, perhaps, forfeited the privileges of baptism ; communicants—or rather candidates for communion—as being

possibly unworthy ; and the dead might be buried without the shadow of an intimation as to their final state.—If this theory were carried into effect, the church would at least escape the guilt of administering false consolation.

If it be said, that we are not called upon to provide against abuse and perversion—even allowing the above to be a just statement of the evil—I must again recur to what we all do in matters of common life and self-interest. Why draw up such accurate rules for Friendly Societies, for Savings' Banks, for the collection of taxes, payment of tithes, and arrangement of bankruptcies ? Why not be satisfied with a few indefinite regulations, and leave the rest to *the judgment of charity*, and to *the hope which may exist on this side despair* ?

It is painful to pursue this portion of our subject, by reminding some, who ought to need no such reminiscence, that *the judgment of charity* is a phrase invented by a bad world to screen itself from the attacks of an uneasy conscience, and to keep in countenance the companions and abettors of its crimes. It is, in the mean time, astounding to recollect, that the closing scene of life is frequently the very last station where true charity can place itself. Mr. Scott writes : “ Often has it been observed, that men upon a death-bed, and

aware that they could not recover, have appeared more trifling, profane, avaricious, morose, fierce, or cruel, than at any former period : so that those around them have been tempted, by their intolerable conduct, to wish them dead before the hour arrived ! Some have even seemed to regret with their dying lips that they could do no more mischief in the world before they left it*.”

When the Abergavenny Indiaman was lost, in February 1805, several of the crew attacked the spirit-room ; when, as the ship was in the very act of sinking, a sailor said to an officer who repelled the assailants : “ It will be all one with us an hour hence.” *Such assaults are known to be common ;* and the reader will judge of their connection with our subject. Yet if the bodies of these men were washed ashore, they were all interred with an act of thanksgiving for their deliverance, and under the shadows of the judgment of charity !

The love of the Gospel hopes and believes all things in favour of miserable men—never in the face of obtrusive facts. It receives with a wide-extended embrace all who discover signs of penitence and faith ; but loves them too well to flatter them to their ruin.

* Commentary on 2 Kings i. 9—18. P. O.

It is the *enemy* who soothes the indifferent and suspicious with language approaching to gratulation and confidence. He likes well the absence of all discipline, and the indiscrimination of character in a public ritual. With him, many are called, and many also are chosen. He sees, at least, equal numbers of travellers on the broad and the narrow way; or he would persuade such as are crowding in at the wide gate, that it leads elsewhere than to absolute and eternal destruction. “But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost!”

CHAPTER XI.

THE LITURGY.

If any man will now say that our Prayer-book is taken out of the Mass, let him know rather that the Mass was cast out of our Prayer-book, into which it was injuriously and impiously intruded. The good of those prayers are ours in the right of Christians; the evil that was in them, let them take as their own. If a piece of gold be offered to us, will we not take it because it was taken out of the channel?—BISHOP HALL.

THE writer of the preceding extract had been called to everlasting rest some years before the last revision of the Liturgy; and therefore his posthumous remarks* on the character of our ritual only apply to it partially as it now stands, and as it was deteriorated after the Restoration.

With regard to the vulgar adulation usually accumulated upon the entire of our ecclesiastical arrangements, it is obvious that all such wanton

* Shaking of the Olive Tree. 1660. 421—424.

and indiscriminate praise inevitably weakens, and exposes to derision, the cause it affects to support and dignify. Most ponderous burdens of this kind of commendation it has been the lot of the Church of England to sustain. Under the weight of false friendship it has frequently staggered; and might have fallen, had not the powers of moderation come to its assistance.

On the other hand, it has derived occasional strength from the unmeasured contumely of its enemies; who have borne so hard upon the subject of their oppression, as to have drawn from more generous foes, as well as from neutrals, expressions of indignant commiseration.

In applying these observations more immediately to the Liturgy, it may be nearest the truth to remark, that the elements of our service-book are pure as the sacred fountain whence they are originally drawn—although a portion of the stream flowed, in its previous course, through the feculent sewers of the Papal Antichrist. But, from various causes, the formulary is perfect only in its elements. The gold is alloyed and dimmed; and, at this period, needs to be purified and burnished.

It was a circumstance peculiarly inauspicious to our Liturgy, that it was last revised at a moment of all others most unfavourable to the just influence of the spirit of reform. The revisers were in

a state of rampant triumph ; and were able to dictate such terms as a lion might have offered to a herd of deer, or Napoleon dispatched from Marengo and Austerlitz.

Rapin's remarks on the Savoy Conference, and which partially apply to what had previously taken place at Hampton Court, are generally words of truth and soberness. He says, " That such discussions are seldom attended with a happy success ; First, because the two parties must be equally animated with the spirit of peace and charity, which is rarely found among men ; and, if I may venture to say it, still more rarely among churchmen. Secondly, because in these conferences one of the parties is usually superior, and in possession of power ; and therefore not very ready to quit that advantage, to be reduced to an equality : so, no success can be expected, unless one of the parties will yield every thing to the other. This recalls to my mind a saying of a French Catholic, a man of wit, to a minister, after the conclusion of the religious war in France. *If, said he, you had come to a composition with us while the sword was in your hand, we might have made you some concessions ; but now that you are conquered, we would not yield you so much as the christening of bells.* The case was much the same in England, at the time I am speaking of. We have seen the

concessions of Charles I. in the treaty of Newport, with regard to Episcopacy; which, if it was not entirely given up by him, was however reduced to a very small matter. But after the restoration of Charles II. the use of the surplice was of too great consequence to religion to be relinquished.

“Thirdly, the animosity between the two parties generally hinders the conferences from succeeding. The one cannot bear to receive laws from the other, nor think of revoking what has been once advanced.—Fourthly, instead of thinking seriously on peace, both parties seek only to surprize one another.—Lastly, it too often happens that these conferences are granted, by the prevailing to the oppressed party, only to have it said that peace was offered, but rejected by the contrary party.

“There is room to believe, that in this conference all these circumstances met, and therefore it is no wonder it succeeded like the rest of the same nature; for, in short, it broke off without any effect; and, as too commonly happens, each party threw the blame upon the other. Mr. Baxter, in his relation of it, says, that the bishops were absolutely against all concessions. But in another relation it is said, the Presbyterians were so obstinately attached to their opinions, that they would

not recede from a single point; and that at last, upon the Bishop of Durham's proposal, being required to declare in writing what they thought sinful in the Liturgy, they put into the list all the articles which kept them from joining with the Church of England, without one exception. They thereby shewed, that they considered as sinful all the forms and practices of the Church of England, even to the use of the surplice, and, by consequence, their refusal of an accommodation, unless their opinions were entirely conformed to.

“These are the mutual accusations of the two parties, on which I am far from deciding any thing as to the truth of the facts. All I can say, without wronging either party, is, that the Presbyterians ought to have receded from several points, which are manifestly indifferent; and that the Bishops should not have scrupled to give up the same points*. But people were then very far from being inclined to charity and condescension.”

The irritated feeling of the time was suffered to descend to posterity in the Preface to the revised ritual; the very first sentence of which not only

* In this statement of the reciprocal crimination, Rapin has leaned to the Episcopal side; as might readily be shewn by reference to the official documents of the time; to say nothing of Baxter's account of the Conference, bearing upon it internal evidence of his fidelity.

begs the question in dispute, but bestows a self-compliment, in a style utterly beneath the dignity of a party, thus degraded by its own littleness, and condescending to invest a magnificent hierarchy with the cast-off raiment of an obscure sect. “It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England, ever since the first compiling of her public Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it;”—a position similar to what the most insignificant institution may declare of itself on every variation of its economy; proving nothing whatever, but a sense of its own wisdom, and such a degree of self-satisfaction as is always disclaimed by great minds, far more conscious of imperfection than of success.

The rest of this unhappy preliminary is too consistent with its beginning. The whole is a blemish, which our wish for the perpetuity and influence of the Church should impel us at once to remove; and to substitute, in its place, a grave and dignified address, calculated to solemnize and edify the reader, and to prepare him for the religious use of the devotional sequel.

I offer these remarks on the first article in the Prayer-book, to shew how vulnerable the partisans

of the age of the Restoration rendered their *Improved Version* at the very outset; and to illustrate the low condition to which such men reduced the work of the Reformation.

Our Establishment, in fact, was in bad hands; and, as a recent writer on her side is compelled to confess, "gave herself airs. And although the early Protestants of the time of the Reformation, of every then existing orthodox communion, gave each other the right hand of fellowship, it was not long before the ministers of that sect of Protestants which had been established by the Crown of England, acted as the Popish church had done before, and cast off from her every one who would not unite with her in the most trifling and unimportant forms. Hence she herself set the example of schism, by forcing out of her communion men whose piety or whose folly, whose wisdom or whose weakness, disliked her formulary, her surplices, and bands; denying their ordination, and refusing even to allow them the rights of citizenship."

But with regard to the Liturgy, I do not profess to furnish a regular detail concerning the earlier division of that subject. It is, however, impossible to pass over the *Calendar*, without being confounded by the circumstance that the Apocrypha should be retained; and especially that such im-

pure trash as, for example, the sixth and seventh chapters of Tobit, can any longer be tolerated in any branch of the Christian church.

What comparative purity may be found in selections from the plays of Dryden and Wycherly, is known to those who have read them. I can only add myself, that there are low scenes in Shakspeare, and jocose chapters in the Waverley novels, which would be eminently pure and edifying, if addressed to a Christian congregation, when compared with the nauseous gabble which a clergyman is required to read as the first lesson for the evening service of the thirtieth of September.

On the other hand, the entire Book of the Revelation is excluded; although its second and third chapters rank among the most important portions of the Sacred Volume! If the introduction of the stigmatized part of the Apocrypha be a violation of morals, the exclusion of the Apocalypse is the commission of a fraud. The church of Christ is robbed of a portion of its most nutritive sustenance.

CHAPTER XII.

THE THREE CREEDS.

Often, when men think that they have brought truths into the strictest propriety of expression and order, they lose both their power and their glory. Hence is the world filled with so many lifeless, sapless, artificial declarations of Divine truth. We may sooner squeeze water out of a pumice-stone, than one drop of spiritual nourishment out of them.—OWEN.

THE surprise of a reader already startled by the author's efforts towards a partial dissection of the Liturgy, will not be abated when I pass on to the three Creeds; and plead, if not for their complete removal, yet for their transfer to their natural and legitimate place, in the Articles.

In referring to the first of these symbols, I utter a long-suppressed astonishment that this indefinite, deficient, and ill-assorted compend of the Gospel could ever have been palmed upon the universal church under the abused name of the Apostles' Creed.

It maintains a deep and dead silence on the two grand fundamental doctrines of Revelation,—original sin, and the atonement !

To the former of these, no one can possibly contend that it contains the shadow of an allusion. To the latter, it may possibly be pleaded that a reference is made by the mention of the passion and death of Christ.

But what is the naked fact ? “He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried,” is the whole of what is said ; and this whole is equally true of the thieves who were crucified with Him. In each instance it is the bare recital of an historical fact ; and believed, not merely by the Socinian, but by the Mohammedan, and even by the sceptic, who finds a similar record in the well-known and undisputed passage of Tacitus *.

To this may be added the unaccountable fact, that, so far is this Creed from connecting the atonement with the death of Christ, that its third division mentions *the forgiveness of sins*, in absolute *disjunction* from his death !

If we advance to the Athanasian Creed, we still find nothing at all referable to the same great and most essential doctrine ; except the brief and in-

* “Auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui, Tiberio Imperante, per Procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat.”—*Annal.* l. xv. c. 44.

definite, and, as it would seem, accidental assertion, *who suffered for our salvation.*

The Nicene fathers furnish nothing more than, *was crucified also for us*; and, in *their* third division, they *acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins*; again disjoining pardon from the death of Christ, and imputing it vaguely to the initiatory ordinance of his church.

So that we have three creeds, containing nothing whatever on original sin, the existence and effects of which are the cause why an atonement is needed; and, with regard to the atonement itself, furnishing only a few desultory assertions, with no distinct application; and, in two of the examples, formally separating the forgiveness of sins from the only source of pardon.

To contrast the ambiguity, coldness, and sterility of these confessions with the fervour and richness of the manner in which the Apostles themselves connected the death of Christ with its consequences, I will adduce, from their own writings, the following illustration of the argument:—"When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son....by whom we have now received the atonement:" "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world:" "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made

a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree :” “ The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world :” “ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins :” “ Ye, who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ :” “ Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour :” “ Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it that he might present it to himself a glorious church :” “ Having made peace by the blood of his cross to reconcile all things to himself :” “ You, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death :” “ Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross :” “ Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him :” “ Who gave himself a ransom for all :” “ Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity :” “ That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death :” “ By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us :” “ He is the mediator of the New Testa-

ment, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance :” “ Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus :” “ Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate :” “ Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish :” “ Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God :” “ The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin :” “ God sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins :” “ Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood :” “ Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation :” “ These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb : therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple :” “ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb :” “ And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father’s name written on their foreheads ; and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and no man could learn

that song but the redeemed from the earth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb: and in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God:" "He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence: for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.... and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."

Would it be believed, that a church in full possession of this splendid profusion of doctrine respecting the death and sovereignty of Christ—and I have given but a specimen—should content itself with the poverty of creeds which it appears so fondly to cherish, as though in them were treasured up all the unsearchable riches of Christ!

In recurring, at this point, to the Apostles' and Athanasian creeds—for at Nice the article was omitted—it is matter of additional surprise that a reference to the descent of Christ into hell should be found among the confessions of the Protestant church. It is among those subjects which supply theological speculators with one of their most useless and injurious employments,—discussion on a point capable of various meanings, and none of them essentially connected with everlasting sal-

vation. What an illustration of this is Bishop Horsley's elaborate discourse (on 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20), in reference to a subject which occasioned so much trouble to that eminent scholar and theologian, Bishop Pearson ; as may be observed in his great work on the Creed, where he confesses the article to have been first dove-tailed into this confession about four hundred years after Christ—and this is primitive Christianity, and the hoary majesty of antiquity !*

In trying—for it is only trying—to explain so dark and ambiguous an article, we are driven to the necessity of softening a word so awful as hell, into *hades* : and when we are asked, what is meant by *hades*, we talk about the place of departed spirits—of which we can tell nothing. Yet our sponsors are enjoined to say, they *stedfastly believe* in—what neither they nor their instructors know !

To such strange expedients has this article driven some of the wisest of mankind, that the Scotch Confession, as one example, gives the following extraordinary gloss ; “ *continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death :*” as though there were any definable difference between

* See Dr. Campbell's Preliminary Dissertations, No. VI. Part 2.

this condition, and death itself. Are not *all* the dead in the state of the dead, and under the power of death? Is not life the state of the living, and under the power of life? Where, then, the distinction between the death of Christ, and his continuance in the state of the dead?

I do not like the word, but there seems to be a *fatality* attendant upon this point; as it re-appears in the third of the Thirty-nine Articles: "As Christ died for us, and was buried; so also it is to be believed that he went down into hell." This article leaves the matter precisely where it was found; and, most unhappily, gives it a disproportionate importance, while it diffuses the original perplexity. It might also intimate, that some *other* portions of the creed were acknowledged to be open to controversy.

With regard to the Athanasian symbol, it is high time that something should be done to close for ever this hitherto inexhaustible source of evil to the church of Christ. Let not the reader be startled. My own objection to it is, not that it contains heresy, but that it is so much below the dignity and eternal importance of its subject. It is a dry, abstract, unapplied, series of positions about the Trinity; a theory without an explicit reference to practical utility.

Instead of its being *necessary before all things*—

whether this alluded to its priority in point of time, or importance—it is rather true that we *arrive* at the doctrine from a previous point of our spiritual progress. It is a *superstructure*; and the basis of which is the conviction of our guilt and misery. But of this no mention is made. The creed offends no man's pride by annihilating self-righteousness before the cross; and offers no obstacle to the path of the libertine, by requiring personal holiness. It is a doctrine without the atonement, and without any defined connection with practical consequences.

One lamentable result of this is, that speculative theologians feel well satisfied with their supposed belief in a Triune Deity, though all the while they know nothing of the Father reconciled through the Son by the Holy Ghost. Hence we have Athanasians who write in defence of their creed; yet jealous of the scheme of justification by faith in Christ, and opposing the doctrine of the influences of the Spirit. They first, as they imagine, equalize the Divinity of the Three Persons in the Godhead; and then demolish their own theory, the moment it is needed for the salvation of mankind.

Speculators such as these resemble a physician, who should deliver in a lazar-house an eloquent oration on the powers of medicine; but turn away,

with a look of withering contempt, from his audience, as soon as any of them ventured to supplicate for relief. They are declaimers about the inestimable value of liberty to a slave ; whom they leave in his fetters, and deny him the only means of freedom.

In the Absolution of our Church we declare, “ He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.” The Athanasian Creed is totally silent about repentance, and, with the exception of the four ambiguous words, *suffered for our salvation*—if that really be an exception—is also as entirely silent on the Gospel ; since, properly, there are no glad tidings in a definition of the Trinity, where no way of approach is opened to a sinner. He is barely told of an abstract and inaccessible God.

I therefore am so far from admiring this cherished symbol, that I never repeat it without pain ; feeling how wretchedly it seems even to mock the miserable, by telling them what sounds so grand and imposing, but deserts them at last without pointing out the remedy of all our distempers, the sure and certain way to everlasting happiness. Neither do I in the least wonder at the cold sneers and irony of the Socinian, when he asks his Athanasian opponent, what he *gains* by his splendid hypothesis ; and when the Athanasian secretly

feels that all his orthodoxy serves for matter of controversy, and for nothing better: and that he and his antagonist differ only in this, that one defends the Trinity, and the other denies it; while neither of them aspires after “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.”

Let us hear Bishop Taylor: “He who goes about to speak of the mysterious Trinity, and does it by words and names of man’s invention, may amuse himself, and build tabernacles in his head, and talk something, he knows not what: but the good man, that feels the power of the Father, and to whom the Son is become wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is shed abroad; to whom God hath communicated the Holy Ghost the Comforter: this man, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone truly understands the mysteriousness of the Holy Trinity *.”

* Bickersteth’s Christian Student, 487. This author writes: “The doctrine of the Trinity has suffered from its defenders. It is never stated,” in Scripture, “as a mere speculative dogma, however important, but in connection with our own privileges and duties; as the object of our faith and worship (Matt. xxviii. 19); as the source of all spiritual blessings (2 Cor. xiii. 14; Rev. i. 4, 5); as bearing their respective parts in the divine economy in every act of approach to God (Eph. ii. 18).” —*Ibid.* 119.

I add, with pleasure, the following amplification of Bishop Taylor's sentiments, as expressing what all genuine Trinitarians feel upon this essential doctrine—the only key to this mystery of godliness.

“ My first principle in religion is, what the Scripture teaches me of the utter depravity of human nature, in connection with the spirituality and sanction of the law of God. I believe we are by nature sinners, by practice universally transgressors ; that we are dead in trespasses and sins ; and that the bent of our natural spirit is enmity against the holiness, government, and grace of God. Upon this ground, I see, feel, and acknowledge the necessity of such a salvation as the Gospel proposes ; which, at the same time that it precludes boasting, and stains the pride of all human glory, affords encouragement to those who may be thought, or who may think themselves, the weakest or the vilest of mankind. I believe, that whatever notions a person may take up from education or system, no one ever did, or ever will, feel himself and own himself to be such a lost, miserable, hateful sinner, unless he be powerfully and supernaturally convinced by the Spirit of God. There is, when God pleases, a certain light thrown into the soul, which differs not merely in degree, but in kind, *toto genere*, from any thing that can

be effected or produced by moral suasion or argument. But the Holy Spirit teaches or reveals no new truths, either of doctrine or precept, but only enables us to understand what is already revealed in the Scriptures. Here a change takes place; the person that was spiritually blind begins to see. The sinner's character, as described in the word of God, he finds to be a description of himself; that he is afar off, a stranger, a rebel; that he has hitherto lived in vain. Now he begins to see the necessity of an Atonement, an Advocate, a Shepherd, a Comforter; he can no more trust to his own wisdom, strength, and goodness; but, accounting all his former gain but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, he renounces every other refuge, and ventures his all upon the person, work, and promise of the Redeemer. In this way, I say, he will find the doctrine of the Trinity not only a proposition, but a principle: that is, from his own wants and situation he will have an abiding conviction that the Son and Holy Spirit are God, and must be possessed of the attributes and powers of Deity, to support the offices the Scriptures assign them, and to deserve the confidence and worship the Scriptures require to be placed in them and paid to them. Without this awakened state of mind, a divine, reputed orthodox, will blunder wretchedly even in defending his own opinions. I have seen

laboured defenders of the Trinity, which have given me not much more satisfaction than I should probably receive from a dissertation upon the rainbow composed by a man blind from his birth *."

This is a just description of the process by which we *reach* the doctrine of the Trinity; and it then ceases to be a series of shadowy and inapplicable abstractions.

I cannot find room for any formal analysis of the Athanasian Creed, but shall close this part of our inquiry by asking, If it really possess such a priority in point of time and importance, how is it that it is read only on three *Sundays* of the year; that sponsors are accepted at the font on the profession only of the Apostles' Creed; that this same Apostles' Creed suffices for catechumens; and, finally, for the faith of the sick: to whom the minister says, "I shall rehearse to you the articles of our faith; that you may know whether you do believe as a Christian man should, or no"—and then puts the Apostles' Creed into an interrogative form?

It is a legitimate deduction from these circumstances, that the doctrines of the Trinity and of the Atonement are unnecessary for sponsors, catechumens, and for the dying. I do not see how it is possible to evade this conclusion.

* Newton's Works, i. 568.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STATE SERVICES—RELIGIOUS ADULATION —THE CANONS.

No sound ought to be heard in the church but the healing voice of Christian charity. The cause of civil liberty and civil government gains as little as that of religion by this confusion of duties. Those who quit their proper character, to assume what does not belong to them, are, for the greater part, ignorant both of the character they leave, and of the character they assume. Wholly unacquainted with the world in which they are so fond of meddling, and inexperienced in all its affairs, on which they pronounce with so much confidence, they have nothing of politics but the passions they excite. Surely the church is a place where one day's truce ought to be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind.—BURKE.

A most oppressive weight of objection against the Liturgy would be effectually, and easily, removed by compliance with the three following principles of reform. In the first place, Let the ritual be cleansed from every expression even tending to irritate another party ; from personalities of whatever dimensions. On this point, the services

for the fifth of November, thirtieth of January, and twenty-ninth of May, furnish revolting examples, and such as need not be particularized. They are an illegitimate scion of the Liturgy, and have long since lapsed into desuetude ; or, if used, have been read by all men of reflection with feelings of disgust, grief, and shame.

On this subject, and on a collateral cause of humiliation, I cordially concur in the following remarks :—“ When, at the Restoration, the two forms of public devotion for the martyrdom of Charles the First, and for the return of the Second Charles, were drawn up by the then hierarchy, a truly humiliating difference was discernible between the ancient Liturgy, as generally compiled by the Reformers, and these two appendages. When the Jews saw the second temple, they wept!

“ The offices in question were, in fact, drawn up by Sancroft ; a prelate whose character these performances teach us to appreciate. For some time his productions were laid aside as improper ; and other forms, constructed with sobriety and moderation, proposed to be adopted. But on Sancroft’s succession to the primacy, he revived the energy of *Ego et Rex meus*, and contrived to introduce his own performances under the royal authority. They were accordingly inserted in the Prayer-book, as we now find them.

“After the Savoy Conference, as Burnet relates, ‘a collect was also drawn up for the Parliament, in which a new epithet was added to the king’s title, that gave great offence, and occasioned much indecent raillery : he was styled *our most religious king*. It was not easy to give a proper sense to this, and to make it go well down ; since, whatever the signification of *religious* might be in the *Latin* word, as importing the sacredness of the king’s person, yet in the *English* language it bore a signification that was in no way applicable to the king. And those who took great liberties with him, have often asked him, What must all his people think, when they heard him prayed for as their most religious king ?’

“Would Cranmer, and Ridley, and Jewell, all high prerogative men, as is evident from the Homilies on Rebellion, have created a world of causeless mislike and irritation for the sake of a single epithet ; which even the good sense and easy nature of Charles the Second would first have laughed at, and then have discarded from the Liturgy?

“But while the religious sensibility of that monarch’s prelates was sufficiently stagnant, they were wide awake, and all in motion, when the debates of the times touched the prerogative. Their error was so far excusable, as being, in the

usual course of human things, the effervescence of minds fresh with the feelings of injury, and intoxicated with a recent and finished victory.

“Political as well as religious opinions are connected with this subject. Mr. Gisborne writes: ‘To draw up forms of public prayer on particular occasions falls within the province of the bishops. In framing them, care should be taken to shun adulation; and if the events to which they relate are of a political nature, all expressions should be avoided, as far as may be found practicable, which may be likely to wound the consciences of clergymen who are to use them. In the time of the American war, when the sentiments of the nation were so divided respecting the justice of the contest, it is probable that many clergymen, of unquestionable loyalty and attachment to their sovereign, entertained such opinions, or at least such doubts, on the subject, as to feel great scruples in delivering the strong language adopted in the prayers then prescribed.’ (*Duties of Men*, ch. xi.)

“Mr. Gisborne’s important sentiment reminds us of the embarrassment felt by many persons at the Restoration; who, however they execrated the murderers of Charles the First, were very far from adopting the views of the royal party in the contest with the parliament. They hesitated to denominate the opposition to the king’s measures

the Great Rebellion. The men referred to were not plebeians and puritans; but noblemen, and gentlemen of high consideration, and upholders of episcopal discipline. So far indeed were the Puritans from being the main pillars of the Usurpation, that several of their most distinguished leaders were active in restoring the royal government. The conduct of Sancroft (above mentioned) under such circumstances, was impolitic and feeble to an unaccountable degree. Had he possessed but an average share of foresight, he might have suspected that influence is a treasure never to be lavished away; and that it is extremely unwise to *waste in health the resources of sickness**."

Alas! never did the successors of the Reformers degrade the church so miserably, as when they were allowed to add such wretched appendages. It was building a range of hovels between the buttresses of a cathedral.

In the next place, Let the doctrinal system of the ritual be symmetrized, by the removal of inconsistencies and of dubious positions. This remark applies to what has been already offered respecting the three creeds; also to the baptismal office, and to all points where genuine Christians either hesitate, or adopt opposing opinions. It is maintained,

* Christian Observer, 1812, p. 641.

that no single branch of the Protestant church has a spiritual right to exact submission to any integral part of its scheme, unless founded on the general basis of the Reformation ; that no doctrine ought to be decidedly recognised, unless acknowledged by such men as Cranmer and Calvin, Latimer and Luther, Leighton and Rutherford, Reynolds and Baxter. The elements of the Anglican faith are identified with what was taught by the men in question : the difference resides in subordinates and non-essentials.

Thirdly, Let there be an entire excision of all such expressions as bestow, in the presence of God, compliments—and, above all, religious compliments—upon any person, or persons, assembled in the congregation. It was, as already argued, a dark and lowering day for the church, when Charles the Second—and in *his* time the phrase was first introduced!—was called, by the whole body of clergy, a *most religious king*. His late Majesty is said to have erased these words from his private copy of the Prayer-book ; and to have substituted, *a miserable sinner*. All who revere the memory of that afflicted monarch will hope that the statement is correct. It was one instance, at least, of the dignity and elevation of his character ; and of his consciousness of the perfect equality of mankind, in the guilt and shame of the Fall.

There is another example of the extreme expediency of the complimentary system, in the service for the Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth ; where every female, without the shadow of discrimination, hears herself enrolled among sincere worshippers, by the response, “ Who putteth her trust in thee.” In this, as in a former example, we are precipitated upon the same dilemma ; for, if we acknowledge her confidence in God, we cannot refuse her claims to human confidence. Consequently, no female, who goes through the ceremony, ought to be received with the least suspicion, if she offers herself as an occasional assistant in the house, garden, national-school ; or in any other situation where our personal interests, or religious principles, warn us to be cautious.

We are here reminded, also, of the flattery bestowed, in our ritual, not merely upon the living, but the dead. Not only is Charles the First called a martyr—which he never was, except in that political and worldly sense which partizans may apply to James the First, Louis the Sixteenth, and even Napoleon himself—but, in the office for the 30th of January, he is embalmed by language declaratory of his eternal state ; to say nothing of the parallel between his sufferings and those of our Lord ! In the Preface to the Prayer-book, and elsewhere, allusion is also made to princes of

blessed memory. How is the epithet applicable, for instance, to James the First? And what is the meaning of this secularized word in the Beatitudes, and in the declaration respecting such as die in the Lord?

Many temerarious defenders of these things forget that the religious phraseology applied to modern kings is compounded of the language exclusively authorized by the Jewish Theocracy, and of the terms connected with the hero-worship and demonology of the Pagan world. In relation to our subject, Paley writes: "For this purpose were introduced the titles of Sacred Majesty, of God's Anointed, Representative, Vicegerent; together with the ceremonies of coronations, calculated not so much to recognise the authority of sovereigns, as to consecrate their persons. The Roman emperors usurped the titles and arrogated the worship of the gods. The mythology of the heroic ages, and of many barbarous nations, was easily converted to this purpose*."—A similar system has been discovered even among the aborigines of Polynesia: "Their government, in all its multiplied ramifications, was closely interwoven with their false system of religion, in its abstract theory, and in its practical details. The office of high-priest was

* Moral Phil. book vi. chap. ii.

frequently sustained by the king, who thus united in his own person the highest civil and sacerdotal station in the land. The genealogy of the reigning family was usually traced back to the first ages of their traditional history; and the kings, in some of the islands, were supposed to have descended from the gods. Their persons were always sacred*.”

It would also seem to be the doctrine of some men, both as politicians and divines, that the regal claims of Charles the First depended upon his personal abilities, conjugal and paternal character, and the authorship of the *Icon*; and that the credit of the church was really connected with the diary and theology of Archbishop Laud. From these theorists proceeded the fixture of such terms as *martyr* and *blessed* to circumstances where they were entirely inapplicable.

Few things are so incurably injurious to the cause of truth, as the degradation of purely spiritual expressions to the service of this world. It is the investiture of a rebel with the crown, sceptre, and ermine of royalty; as if in mockery of his sovereign's dignity.

I know full well what will be said about the tendency of such remarks to weaken the attach-

* Ellis's Polynesian Researches, ii. 341.

ment of subjects to kings, and the necessity of retaining things as they are, in support of an insulted throne. But it would be far, far better, to substitute, in the place of such idle allegations, a timely concession, that both the throne and the altar can be alone supported by a loyalty, not of purchase, but of principle.

It is not, indeed, for an obscure individual like myself to inform kings, and the confidential servants of kings, of the difficulty and disgust connected with the arrangements of patronage. They perceive and feel it already ; and with sensations unknown to one who only hears at a distance of placemen and pensioners threatening to desert, if certain promises are withheld, and reversionary interests not secured.

If this be not the case, also, in negotiations of a more unearthly character, the world is far more disinterested than its friends hitherto have allowed. Sure I am, that the church, *in extremis*, will be strangely deceived if it depends upon fidelity built only on the sand of preferment. Its safest alliance is with men who look beyond the things of time, and measure their importance by their relation to eternity.

The hour may come, and indeed is in some degree arrived, when the peace of the empire, and of the Established Church, shall considerably de-

pend upon the exertions of Separatists. We owe much already to the efforts of these irregular troops, who have been the Swiss of the hierarchy; except that they have fought without pay, and without commission, but not always without some verbal acknowledgment of their services. Mr. Southey, at least, owns their claims to courage, and to conquest. He writes: "We have a numerous class of people, bred in the filth and corruption of large towns and manufacturing districts, and allowed to grow up in that corruption as much neglected, and consequently becoming as depraved, as the vagrants of former times, against which so many and such severe laws were enacted. These people are unbelievers, just as savages are, (shame to us that they should be so!) because, as far as regards all moral culture, all needful instruction, all humanizing and redeeming influences, they are like savages in the very midst of cultivated society. Bad as the consequences of this most culpable omission on the part of government have been, and continue to be, they must have been far more hideous and appalling, if Methodism had not intervened, and carried with it humanity and civilization, as far as it has spread, among the poor perishing creatures."

In imitation of the disinterested services of these allies, and of all other separatists of similar preten-

sions, let the Liturgy, if it is to be revised, obviously present to mankind an aspect of religion entirely purified from human interests. It will then have a right to demand, as a debt, the homage now refused on the ground of its having failed in establishing a claim properly and exclusively spiritual.

Little, I trust, need be added on the necessity of severing from our folio Prayer-book that ambiguous body of ecclesiastical law drawn up, under the name of Canons, at the commencement of the seventeenth century. They are a most unhappy example of the accuracy with which the Anglican Protestants of that day copied the style and spirit of the Roman-Catholic church. There are the *siquis dixerit*, and the *anathema sit*, and the unproved assertions, of the Council of Trent; as thus:—
 “Whosoever shall hereafter affirm that the Church of England, by law established under the King’s Majesty, is not a true and apostolical church, teaching and maintaining the doctrine of the Apostles....that the form of God’s worship in the Church of England, established by law, and contained in the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments, is a corrupt, superstitious, and unlawful worship of God, or containeth any thing in it that is repugnant to the Scriptures....that any of the Nine-and-thirty Articles are in

any part superstitious or erroneous, or such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe unto; let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored, but only by the Archbishop, after his repentance, and public revocation of such his wicked errors."

It is evident, not only that such a decree is obsolete and powerless, but that it augments prejudice, and excites clamorous derision, on a subject where the church will always be listened to with distrust; since the canons now quoted are unblushing acts of self-adulation, and of self-interest.

The genuine regulations of the Christian church are to be found in the Apostolical Epistles; and as illustrated by the conduct of the Apostles themselves, in the Acts drawn up by one of their own number. The modern pleader for the usages of antiquity, will there discover something more ancient than the councils of what is so unaccountably called the primitive church;—a phrase which is suffered to expand itself over the first three or four—for the number is not of the least importance—centuries; during which the ecclesiastical system might have been much more accurately designated had it been called the secondary, or tertiary, church.

Primitive Christianity discovers its character only

in the Scriptures of the New Testament : for no sooner do we sink into the writings of what are called the Apostolical Fathers, than we begin to feel the poverty of uninspired theology, and the early efforts of the secondary church to gain an undue and worldly authority.

The Epistles of St. Clement and St. Ignatius afford a singular example of mankind's disposition to admire things upon trust ; otherwise, we never could have heard so many eulogies on writings which are inferior to Howe and Leighton, to a degree which even such an adventurer as myself must hesitate to declare. As to the Shepherd of Hermas, those must be called upon to characterize it who have succeeded, where the present writer has failed—in reading it through.

I cannot forbear saying these things, in passing, because we see such writers as Wheatly—the standard authority upon liturgical subjects—consecrating so many usages, and also doctrines, of a questionable or useless nature, by references to the councils and formularies of the secondary and tertiary church ; as though the puerilities of the third century, for instance, were recorded for the imitation of ages consequent to the Reformation.

We feel, at this hour, the deadening effect of our ancestors having degraded themselves into servile copyists, in a thousand cases, where they

should have traced back the steps of a wandering hierarchy to the fountain head—to the code emphatically called the Canonical Scriptures. It is not too late to do this even now; though amidst the noisy and bitter derision of men who, in *all* religious arrangements, are jealous of coming within the sensible influence of the Bible.

But to such a decider of our controversies, and to such a legislator in matters of spiritual law, we shall sooner or later be driven—*unless* (and there seems to be no possible alternative) we compromise with a church which retains the fatuities and pollutions of *antiquity*; and finds the full advantage of doing this, by aids thus liberally furnished, in maintaining its despotic, and all but omnipotent, influence over the Roman-Catholic world.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

I am much more sensible than ever of the necessity of living upon the principles of religion which we are all agreed in, and uniting these ; and how much mischief men that over-value their own opinions have done by their controversies in the church ; how some have destroyed charity, and some caused schisms by them, and most have hindered godliness in themselves, and used them to divert men from the serious prosecuting of a holy life ; and, as Sir Francis Bacon saith (in his *Essay of Peace*), that it is one great benefit of church-peace and concord, that writing controversies is turned into books of practical devotion.—BAXTER.

THE Established Church of Scotland possesses, in its Confession, a symmetry and consistency of faith by no means discoverable in the Articles of the southern branch of the British Reformation. An obvious cause of this superiority is to be found in the fact, that the former creed was drawn up by the same body, and at the same time ; so that its unity of design and structure was the natural

consequence of circumstances extremely favourable to such a result.

It possesses also the honest, honourable, and transparent character of a Christian confession, in subjoining to all its positions references to the Scripture; being, indeed, in a great degree, a cento of inspired phrases arranged with extraordinary perspicuity; and, generally speaking, exhibiting a pattern worthy the imitation of every Reformed communion. Its marginal appeals to the only criterion of the universal church, offer a perpetual defence to every examinant against erroneous induction.

With all this excellence, the Scotch Confession has its share of mistakes, over-statements, assumptions, exclusiveness, and other symptoms of ecclesiastical distemperature; but, as a whole, it is certainly a star of the first magnitude in the spiritual heavens.

On the other hand, the Anglican formulary has blemishes which sadly mar its beauty; and, in some instances, have proved extremely embarrassing to the persons who have most favourably interpreted apparent, if not indisputable, contradictions.

One thing might forbid us to view this portion of our inquiry with despair,—the Church would

gain abundantly by the Articles being re-cast in a more accurate mould ; or, by the insertion into their body of parts now distributed throughout other divisions of our formularies, and where they are evidently confused and misplaced.

For the *first* Article, for example, might be most consistently substituted such clauses of the Athanasian Creed as exclusively illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity. *Then* would all the clamour of objectors to the damnatory clauses be silenced ; and we should have the system itself still entire, and in its proper and natural locality. A similar course might be pursued with regard to *every* point, in all the three creeds, where there occurs a duplicate assertion in the Articles. It would be simply putting things under their proper heads ; collecting, combining, and simplifying materials which at present lie in scattered, disjointed, and complicated masses.

The *second* Article is an obvious example of the benefit derivable from this process. It might be re-constructed, by a combination of various parts of the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds with itself. At the close of this Article there is some recognition of the sacrifice of Christ and its *consequences* : yet, still, not expressed with such particularity as the paramount importance of the doctrine de-

mands. Here, therefore, the deficiency might be remedied.

The *third* Article has been already mentioned ; and may, in this place, be adduced in exemplification of the want of symmetry discernible in our confession. It is not only a redundancy, or excrescence ; but a deformity, without the shadow of an apology for its introduction. It is, in fact, a kind of ecclesiastical anachronism. In the time of Edward the Sixth, when our confession was originally compiled and published, it was declared, “ that the body of Christ lay in the grave but his spirit, which he gave up, was with the spirits which were detained in prison, or in hell, and preached to them, as the place in St. Peter testifieth ”—giving the doctrine a determinate meaning : so that we retain an Article originally intended to impart a definite sense to an ambiguous phrase, and intended for that sole and exclusive purpose ; and yet omit the very essence of the original. We have the premises without the conclusion.

The *fifth* Article is included in the Athanasian Creed. The *sixth* ought properly to have been the first ; and might have borne, in such priority, some resemblance to the appeal made in the Scotch confession. But all mention of the Apocrypha should be entirely discarded. A Protestant church

cught to have no communion whatever with spurious Scripture.

The *eighth* Article is quite superfluous, even as it now stands; for who could possibly have supposed that the three creeds would have been embodied in a national ritual, if they could *not* be proved by Scripture? It is, on another account, utterly useless; since it is only a bare assertion, supported by no sort of argument; and rather injurious to its own cause, by giving aliment for scepticism. Men always begin to suspect something, when theologians betake themselves to mere affirmation, and to indirect praise of their own achievements.

From the *ninth* to the *fifteenth* Articles inclusive, the Church of England shines with a far steadier light; although the last mentioned of these might be much better arranged, and also be placed, with advantage, elsewhere; while the concluding sentence of it properly belongs to another head of doctrine.

The *sixteenth* Article is directed against an obsolete heresy; and reminds us of the singular circumstance, that, while several of the Articles refer to matters of secondary importance, many doctrines of the very highest moment are totally omitted. There is no Article, properly, on the Sin against the Holy Ghost; nothing definite, and applicable to

spiritual uses. There are none on Repentance, Creation, Providence, Sanctification, Christian Liberty, the Morality of the Sabbath, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Last Judgment, and the state of men after death; on all of which there are elaborate and excellent articles in the Scotch Confession.

Of these I shall copy the final one; as illustrating our own deficiency, and the solemn and dignified manner in which it might be supplied.—

“ *Of the Last Judgment.* God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil. II. The end of God’s appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not

the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. III. As Christ would have us certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity ; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security ; and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come ; and may be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus : come quickly. Amen.”

In approaching the confines of the *seventeenth* Article, it becomes the most daring adventurer to proceed with caution. The Article itself is, in my judgment, far superior to all the rest. It is what a theological statement ought to be,—a definite, symmetrical, consecutive doctrine, followed out into its influential consequences, and guarded against libertine abuse. It is, also, an example of that religious exercise of the soul which, under the name of *experience*, has furnished the guilty world with such abundant materials for derision.

At this point of our progress a thousand painful recollections rush upon the memory, as we pause at the fact, that all such doctrinal Articles

of the Church as come into close contact with human prejudice and passion—by wounding, on the one hand, the pride of self-estimation ; and, on the other, by interfering with the gratification of ambition, avarice, and sensual desires—such portions of our confession as these, are matter of perpetual complaint and jealousy with many who are called the pillars of our Establishment. Are these things so ?

I wish to speak without the least reserve or disguise on a subject so awful, when I ask those persons who have read Bishop Tomline's Refutation of Calvinism, and the replies to it by Scott and Williams (particularly the first of these, standing as it does in the very first rank of modern theological treatises), whether the Refutation be, or be not, an attempt to reduce the Gospel to the world's standard ; to explain away the doctrine of original sin, so as to render it no longer repugnant to our self-love ; to assert an inherent power in the human will, independent of preventing grace ; to divide the honour of justification between Divine and human merits ; to plead the intrinsic acceptableness of good works ; to identify baptism with regeneration ; to deny the predestination and election of individuals, as the everlasting purpose of God ; to maintain the Antinomian system of the

Eucharist ; and, generally, to dilute the spiritualities of the Gospel, so as to deprive them of their original character and efficiency !

The *nineteenth* Article partakes of the confusion and inconsistency which, in the regions of controversy, would appear to be inseparably connected with the subject it professes to define ; and cannot be reconciled, either with the *twenty-sixth* Article, or with the definition in the Homily. “The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men :” “In the visible church the evil be ever mingled with the good”—how can these propositions be identified ? Again : the church is a congregation where “the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered ;” which are adduced as the two marks of its genuineness. But the Homily says, “It hath always three notes or marks, whereby it is known : pure and sound doctrine, the sacraments ministered according to Christ’s holy institution, and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline. This description of the church is agreeable both to the Scriptures of God, and also to the doctrine of the ancient Fathers*.”

Here, then, we have a choice of difficulties ; either to harmonize discords, or to obey an uncertain sound.

* Second Part of Homily for Whitsunday.

This is an apposite opportunity for again quoting the Confession of the Church of Scotland, where the following accurate and consistent definition is to be found :—“ *Of the Church.* I. The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be, gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. II. The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the Law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. III. Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto. IV. This catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.

V. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error ; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth to worship God according to his will. VI. There is no other Head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof ; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.”

In conformity to our principle of neutrality, the closing division of this Article should be omitted ; for although there is a general uniformity of opinion in the Protestant world that the Papacy is verily Antichrist, bearing upon her forehead *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth* ; yet the contumely so liberally bestowed upon her throughout the Anglican formularies, and incidentally in the Scotch Confession, is utterly at variance with the compassionate feelings which her guilt, and impending destruction, ought to awaken.

It gives our churches also an air of rivalry and pugnaciousness, inconsistent with the calm dignity and self-possession properly characteristic of any communion separate from a church *drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the*

martyrs of Jesus. It has, indeed, been observed of the thirty-nine Articles, that their very surface is too much disturbed and ruffled by the spirit of controversy; and that our clergy, unless their divinity take a far wider and more pacific range than their own confession, pursue the study of Christianity as if it were rather the exclusive scheme of an angry partisan, than a message of universal peace. Much of our theology thence shews itself under the titles of *Defence, Apology, Vindication, Reply, and Rejoinder*; and, besides this, we are curtailed and crippled by the narrowness and disproportion of our creeds.

On the other hand, bodies of divinity proceeding from writers of another school discover symmetry and coherence. Of this, Dwight's Theology is a most magnificent example. It contains scarcely a word of discussion on such points as the descent of Christ into hades; but exhibits the length and breadth of the land of Revelation. It describes the person and offices of Jesus Christ, with a power and unction which place the author's name among the brightest luminaries of the Christian church.

CHAPTER XV.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

As a latitude in itself of an indefinite nature, and extending to a variety of particulars, is always liable to be enlarged by the subscriber in proportion to his difficulties, until at length it exceeds almost all bounds; it should seem that a revision of the Articles, under the auspices of the bench of bishops, for the purpose of omitting such as may now be superfluous, and simplifying those which are obscure, would contribute equally to the interests of the Established Church, and to the credit and comfort of its ministers.—GISBORNE.

THE *twentieth* Article bears a near resemblance to what is called the vicious circle of the Latin church. If the likeness, however, be not discernible by all, few will be able to detect any utility in a declaration issued by a church warning the world against itself, by telling men not to receive its decrees unless they are sanctioned by the Scriptures. In matters of dispute, arising from such a regulation, who is to be the umpire? The very warning nullifies the exertion of ecclesiastical authority in con-

troversies of faith. It would have been a very different thing if the southern establishment had imitated her sister, and *subjoined* the assumed proofs, as a perpetual and ready reference.

Besides this, a church can do no more than state its own opinion in questions of theology, and insist upon its members' external assent. The questions themselves remain exactly as they were before. For example: the doctrine of purgatory, although received at Rome, and rejected at Canterbury, is, so far, neither proved nor disproved. Scripture is the criterion; but there is no referee, by whose interpretation the disputants will agree to abide. These remarks apply to the concluding sentence of the *twenty-first* Article; which, together with its predecessor, is quite inapplicable to the circumstances of the present age.

The *twenty-second* Article is a singular example of laxity and of uselessness; while its construction, in a literary point of view, is utterly beneath the dignity of a learned community; since it is headed by one subject, and equally concerns four or five others. Suppose the members of an obscure conventicle were to hold a solemn conference, and emit, among other rays of gloomy light, the following decree—'*Of Episcopacy*. The Anglican doctrine concerning episcopacy, forgiveness, worshipping and adoration, as well in cathedrals as in

parish churches, and also dedication of churches to saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.”—It is not easy to imagine what storms of derision would thence blow throughout the land from the Sunday newspapers, and other periodicals, for the next month and quarter. The framers of such an article would be smothered with ironical compliments on the brilliant results of their education, both as to the concinnity of their style and to the symmetry and conclusiveness of their logic.

The fact is, that the twenty-second Article is not merely objectionable from its unaccountable slovenliness of structure, but from its laxity of doctrine. Purgatory, and the other heresies, are called a fond thing. We might, with equal propriety, connect this gentle censure with treason, felony, arson, and colonial slavery; and also term these vainly invented.

It is also extraordinary, that our Reformers—or their professed admirers and copyists—should speak of most malignant and antichristian heresies merely as “grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.” For the sake of what heresies did Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, die at the stake, but for these very fond things, and vain inventions?—These

things are not, barely, unsupported by Scripture ; but they are, in the most serious of all senses, entirely, incurably, eternally repugnant to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

If Purgatory were mentioned at all, it should have been brought forward in this awful connection, and held up to the church as destructive of the very essence of the Gospel,—of the doctrine of a perfect salvation solely through the sacrifice and death of Christ, “ in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

As the article now stands, we might suppose the anti-christian heresies in question to be a series of propositions—scarcely indeed consistent with the Bible, and objectionable as the ebullitions of feeble minds, but—not striking at the root of all that is peculiar to the religion of the New Testament.

I venture upon the above remarks as illustrating the extreme peril of under-stating, and extenuating, what, in point of fact, are doctrines of devils ; and, of course, expose their abettors, not to an evil so comparatively small as a curable mistake, but to errors which pave the broad road leading to everlasting perdition.—It may also be added, that the above Article is an example of confusion and inconclusiveness, such as invites the enemy to examine where the wall may be breached, if not already fallen from its own brit-

tleness of material, and looseness of construction.

Whether the several articles on the two Sacraments are perfectly consistent with the sacramental offices and rubrics, is a discussion too extensive for our immediate purpose. They certainly have afforded ample occasion for debate among Churchmen; and will be allowed to contain many positions obscurely expressed, on subjects where a public formulary should properly be intelligible and definite.

The *thirty-sixth* Article is entirely superfluous, being a mere declaration, that our form of consecration is valid. This is one of the many instances in our confession which conveys not an atom of conviction to an enemy; and is useless in the case of a friend, already persuaded; or, if wavering, gaining nothing from barren affirmations although proceeding from his own party. Such a system of asseveration always awakens the suspicion that a church is conscious of its own debility.

The next Article cannot well be designated as an Article of *Religion*, and belongs rather to Acts of Parliament.

The *thirty-eighth* illustrates the evil of singling out a transient and rude error as matter of grave animadversion, when many permanent, pernicious, and popular delusions are passed over. The

Article itself consists of one assertion, supported by no sort of proof; and of another, which has no direct connection with the subject professedly intended.

Why are there no Articles on such points as the love of money, the danger of ambition, the consequence of sensual indulgences, the vanity of the world, the derision of good men, and a vast variety of subjects of parallel importance; and which constitute, not the temporary heresies of a handful of religionists in by-gone days, but the enduring wickedness of mankind? Neither the wise nor the foolish adherents of the Church can expect the revival of so fond a delusion as the community of goods among Christians; and may reasonably wonder why such a vain invention was rescued from the deep oblivion, to which it would naturally have hastened, by its insertion into a national creed.

There is another head of remark connected with the thirty-nine Articles, of no small importance,—the sanction given to the Book of Homilies. The volume containing these addresses is of considerable size; and, from this circumstance alone, may be supposed to embrace a vast variety of positions, each of which is either consistent or inconsistent with the rest of our formularies. That the book should be entirely in accordance with them is

quite impossible, unless it can be previously proved that they are perfectly in accordance with themselves.

On any other supposition, the Homilies must be received according to the opinions of the recipient; who will, as a matter of course, dovetail his own system by such portions as suit his purpose. The consequence will be, the erection, or repair, of many buildings from the same quarry; all of them differing in design and object, and tenanted by inhabitants at variance with each other.

My own estimate of the Homilies—writing from long remembrance—is, that they carry some doctrines (as, for example, that of original sin) far higher than is done in the Articles; and this explains, in its degree, the neglect in which they were buried for many generations. It is only within these few years that they were revived; first, by the Prayer-book and Homily Society; and secondly, by an institution upheld by its fonder friends, as the demi-official organ of our Establishment.

That they are at variance with the principles of the British Constitution, as a limited monarchy balanced by patrician and popular powers, appears to be now generally conceded: and if they do not unchurch our own Protestant hierarchy, by declaring that the channel through which our

orders were conveyed was no church at all, it is difficult to say what words mean; and, in cases of doubt, by what dictionary they are to be interpreted.

In the second part of the Homily for Whitsunday we read, "If you will compare this" (the previous description of the true church) "with the Church of Rome—not as it was in the beginning, but as it is at present, and hath been for the space of nine hundred years and odd—you shall well perceive the state thereof to be so far wide from the nature of the true church, that nothing can be more . . . the bishops of Rome and their adherents are not the true church of Christ." In the third part of the Homily against Peril of Idolatry, the Church of Rome is called, "a foul, filthy, old, withered harlot . . . whereas, on the contrary part, the true church of God, as a chaste matron"—and then follows much to the same effect.

Yet, from a non-entity, or a harlot, of, now, upwards of a thousand years' duration—the solecism cannot be helped—does the Anglican hierarchy derive the whole of its authority; while numbers of its adherents pride themselves—it is their own phrase—on the fidelity of their attachment to the only legitimate successors of the Apostles, and on their steady renunciation of all other pretenders to pastoral power.

In the midst of these embarrassments it is of very little importance to notice the obsolete phraseology, allusion to past events as present, personality, and vulgar abuse, which pollute the work in question.

The question is, do the clergy give their full assent and consent to the Homilies; and, if not, *what* do they give? It is too serious an inquiry to be resolved by a loose and equivocal reply.

Having made these few strictures—for few they are, compared with the extent of their subjects—on our national formularies, it may justly be demanded, what is the practicable remedy? The cure, if I mistake not, might be readily found, not in the arts of novelty, but in a recurrence to the original principles of the Reformation, and to such a system of doctrinal and practical Christianity as hath been built, since the Reformation, by the combined, co-operative energies of the standard divines of every branch of the Protestant church.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL PRACTICAL CHRISTIANS OF ONE MIND.

I do confidently believe, that if all the particular churches through the Christian world should meet together, and determine secondary and unimporting truths to be believed upon necessity of salvation, and shall enact damnation to all those which shall deny their assent thereunto, they should go beyond the commission which God hath given them, and do an act which God hath never undertaken to warrant: since there can be no new principles of Christian religion, however there may be an application of some formerly received Divine truths to some emergent occasion, and a clearer explication of some obscure verities.—BISHOP HALL.

It is a shield behind which men of the world perpetually hide their hatred of the Gospel, and ward off the remonstrances of a disturbed conscience, to allege, that Christians cannot agree among themselves as to what Christianity is : and this allegation is followed up by an ironical assurance, that, when the disputants come to an agreement, *they* will be also Christians.

The first of these averments is utterly false.

All penitent believers--and of them only do we speak, and not of theological speculators—*do* agree in the essentials of salvation. Of these essentials, and of nothing else whatever, should the doctrinal part of the Anglican formularies be constructed. On this plan, we should lose nothing really valuable ; and we should gain, what we cannot afford to throw away, the cordial concurrence of the purest portion of the church of Christ.

Among our accessions of power would be numbered even the spiritual members of the Papal communion—such men, I mean, as really value Fenelon, and writers of his sentiments and spirit. The *Thoughts* of Blaise Pascal contain the seminal principle of the everlasting Gospel ; and if they also include a few aberrations into the Papal wilderness, these last are exceptions to a rule, and resemble such parts of our own ritual as might be obliterated, not only with perfect safety, but with decided and obvious advantage.

What do we gain by the party spirit of the Preface to the Liturgy ; the ill selection of Proper Lessons, Epistles, and Gospels ; the retention of legendary names and allusions in the Calendar : the lection of the Apocrypha, and the omission of the Apocalypse ; the mention of feasts and fasts never observed ; the repetitions of the Pater-noster, Kyrie eleison, and Gloria Patri ; the wearisome

length of the services ; the redundance and assumptions in the state prayers ; the unsatisfactoriness of the three Creeds ; the disputable character of the Baptismal and Burial offices ; the incompleteness, and dubious construction, of the Catechism, and of the Order of Confirmation ; the inapplicable nature, and absolution, of the Visitation of the Sick ; the imperfection of the Communion Service ; the discordance between the Prayer-book and Bible translations of the Psalms ; the contumelious and offensive language of the state services ; and, added to all these sources of weakness, similar causes of inefficiency in the Articles and Homilies ?

The universal feeling of self-preservation might dictate the necessity of reviewing these many points of insecurity ; as a measure, at least, of prudence, and of prospective advantage. I would repeat a position already advanced,—that no Reformed church has a moral right to insist upon terms of communion not recognised by the general assent of Protestants united in the fundamentals of Christianity. It is a disruption of the common bonds of the church of Christ.

We, for example, have no more right to decree the signature of the cross and the attendance of sponsors as necessary accompaniments of baptism, than the Anti-pædobaptists have to deny

the validity of infant baptism. Neither of the three points are regarded by the Christian world as fundamentals : but baptism itself is so esteemed, and the inference is obvious.

With regard to the right of a government to provide an ecclesiastical system for its own subjects, we must take care how far such a claim is conceded ; since, by an unwary concession, we shall allow the King of Spain to establish the Inquisition, and the democracy of Swisserland the scheme of Neology ; till religious truth and infidelity become convertible terms. It is, indeed, astonishing how nearly Papalists and Protestants approach each other when contending for civil and ecclesiastical modifications of power. Hooker sometimes writes as though he were sailing in the wake of the Papacy ; and his quaint and simple biographer—simple he certainly was, and in more senses than one—has recorded in triumph the panegyric pronounced by Pope Clement VIII. on the Ecclesiastical Polity.

Many of our Episcopalians, absorbed in their own predilections, would seem either not to know, or to have entirely forgotten, that Nonconformists are quite as good judges as ourselves of the nature and obligations of Christianity, and of the order and discipline of the Christian church. They have access to the same means of information ;

and of these they have availed themselves with extraordinary assiduity and success.

This circumstance deserves the more honourable mention, as they are necessarily excluded from the privileged seats of learning. It will, however, be recollected, that Bishop Warburton, the greatest master of human learning that in modern times has adorned the English Episcopacy, went to no university. The author of the *Divine Legation of Moses* began life as an attorney's clerk, and continued in the legal profession till he was twenty-five years of age!

But, in reality, *we*, who have been nurtured under the shelter of academic bowers, have no secrets in our exclusive possession. The temple of truth is open to all who solicit admission; and persons who have almost quarrelled in the vestibule have harmoniously mingled in the interior, and worshipped at the same shrine.

Dissenters from the Church of England have shone, in their respective æras, as most splendid luminaries of the catholic church. "The greater part," says Mr. Newton in his *Apologia*, or defence of himself against Dissenters, "of the Non-conformist ministers of that day (1662, &c.) were the light and glory of the land. They were men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, penetrated with a deep sense of the Redeemer's glory and

love, and of the worth of souls. Their ministrations were accompanied with unction and power. It is no wonder that the world hated such men; that snares were spread for their feet." I cannot but observe, in passing, that these very men could not subscribe a liturgy to which their eulogist declared *his* unfeigned assent and consent, even to all and every thing therein contained!

As composers of what Dr. Johnson calls hortatory theology, their claims to our gratitude may be equalled, but never have been surpassed, by Episcopalian writers. No library can make any pretensions to completeness, in the department of practical divinity, unless it be enriched by the works of Howe, Owen, Edwards, Baxter, Henry, Doddridge, Watts, Dwight, Fuller, and many others of scarcely less inferior name.

Of our most useful and popular commentaries on the entire Scriptures, the greater number has proceeded from the pens of Nonconformists. In theological science, the names of Lardner, Chandler, Campbell, Macknight, Leland, and (Jeremiah) Jones, appear among our standard divines.

Of living writers, it is sufficient to enumerate Ewing, Townley, Watson, Douglas, Adam Clarke, Wardlaw, Fletcher, Boothroyd, Foster, Hall, and Chalmers,—for *he* too, according to the exclusive hypothesis, must share in the guilt of

dissent*. Let it further be considered, that the doctrinal system of their practical writers is substantially the same with the formularies of our church.

In truth, the leading divines in both communions have, for centuries, made common cause against the direct enemies or perverters of the Gospel. They have fought in the same ranks, and partaken of the same conquests. And it is but an act of grateful acknowledgment to Dr. J. P. Smith to remark, that his recent work on the Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, in reply to Mr. Belsham, is, as a competent judge (Mr. Hartwell Horne) has pronounced it to be, “one of those biblical works of which the student will never regret the purchase; and unquestionably the most elaborate defence and proof of the Deity of Jesus Christ extant in our language.”

With regard indeed to Belsham, Priestley, and Taylor of Norwich, I can positively assure the most sceptical reader, that they are no more favourites with the general body of separatists, than with Archbishop Magee, Dr. Nares (and the other

* Ellis's Polynesian Researches ought to be mentioned, as standing in the first rank of modern publications, for their theological and philosophical accuracy, and as illustrating the wisdom of the measures pursued by the exemplary and indefatigable agents of the London Missionary Society—an institution founded on the purest catholic and anti-sectarian principles.

examiners of the “Improved Version of the New Testament”), and the mass of the clergy on both sides the Tweed*.

It is an act, not of liberality, but of abstract justice, thus to own the obligations due to our Dissenting allies. It is also a suicidal act to establish any doctrinal system, or ritual, which excludes *such* partisans from our own privileges.

On the other hand, I would strenuously plead that Dissenters of this class ought to come as near to the National Church as they possibly can. If they would adopt either a liturgy, or a set of articles, or both, they would certainly serve their own cause, and the cause also of the Establishment. In the former instance, they would cease to present an ambiguous front to their opponents; many of whom now regard them with hostility, because there is no accredited symbol of their doctrine, nor definition of their discipline.

If such symbol and definition were furnished, I am confident that numbers of our clergy, of every rank, would be surprised at discovering the union of the Church and of Dissent in the essentials of

* In a few of the preceding paragraphs, and elsewhere in this volume, I have interwoven into the text portions of an ephemeral and local pamphlet, published by the author a few years since.

Christianity. This would, so far, disarm prejudice, and prevent our fighting in the dark ; for, as matters now stand, many of our higher ecclesiastics consider the body of Nonconformists to be Socinians in sentiment, and libertines in conduct.

An estimate so unspeakably injurious has been, in a great measure, formed from the frequent and obtrusive cackling of the Socinian division of Dissent, which has filled up its numbers by its noise ; reminding us of what Burke said of the busy talkers and pamphleteers of the democratical school, who fluttered, among ourselves also, in the morning beams of the French Revolution :—"The vanity, restlessness, petulance, and spirit of intrigue of several petty cabals, who attempt to hide their total want of consequence in bustle, and noise, and puffing, and mutual quotation of each other make you imagine that our contemptuous neglect of their abilities is a mark of general acquiescence in their opinions. No such thing, I assure you. Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field ; or that, after all, they are other than the little, shrivel-

ed, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome, insects of the hour." The pride of the forest, in our own days, affords equal shelter to Magee and Wardlaw; who may "press the yielding herbage" side by side, and ruminate in the same repose and silence.

In the next place, the Separatists would serve the cause of the Establishment, in the measure above suggested, by shewing their proximity to us, and in a correspondent degree softening the asperities of their own people. No Dissenting Realist could well object to such a consequence. It would be, in its own nature, pacific; and might tend to the prosperity of a distinct communion, by rendering that communion far less jealous of those who are at present misunderstood, and therefore misrepresented.

One especial ground of mutual concession would be recognised, by serious thinkers, in the recollection of the universal ignorance of mankind, or—if the phrase better express my meaning—in the scantiness of knowledge which characterises us all; even when living beneath the bright beams of Revelation, and possessed of the light reflected by the wisest of our predecessors in their elaborate researches into Divine mysteries.

Learning, and particularly theological learning,

enables its devotees not so much to measure the depth of spiritual truth, as the shallowness of their own wisdom.

It is to know how little can be known ;

To see another's faults, and feel our own.

It was a conviction of our ignorance of God and ourselves, which made Pascal so emphatically quote, *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself!*

A legitimate induction from these premises seems to urge upon all aspiring to the Christian name, the necessity of yielding every disputable point lying on this side the acknowledged and obvious verities of the Gospel ; those which are indispensable to the mystical life and consolations of the children of God.

If I am a genuine believer, I can surrender a certain view of Baptism, or a secondary article of faith, or a form of polity, or some rite or tenet of accidental value to a friend ; but if you once touch the doctrine of salvation by grace through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, you defraud me of what is essential to my hopes in time, and to my security in the eternal world—all is lost !

I particularize the doctrine where all the truths of the Gospel centre ; and where I learn my misery and ruin, as well as the means of happiness and restoration. I can find this doctrine, and its col-

laterals, as unequivocally in Owen as in Reynolds. It is the common theology of all sound Christians, and is the only source of practical holiness. It is this, and only this, which makes life of any value; while it disarms the last enemy of his terrors and his sting.

From persons who sympathize with the feelings created by such a brief allusion to what the Inspired Record calls "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord," can we satisfactorily expect any co-operation in an attempt to heal the disorders of the universal church among ourselves.

A mere Churchman, and a mere Dissenter, will concede nothing, but what either party judges to be convertible to his own interest. They cannot understand the value of unity, in its directly spiritual influences. An ability to do this supposes an actual possession of religion itself, whether combined with a national or separated church; and which the possessor might have discovered, apart from all connection with the external forms of Christianity. Episcopacy might be no help to him, and Presbyterianism no hindrance; or each of these might stand in his way. The streams of eternal life might reach him through the channel of a liturgy, or of unpremeditated devotion; from

the pulpit of a cathedral, or the sick-bed of a private Christian. In any of these cases there would be an intelligible commentary on the concession of the really primitive church: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us!"

CHAPTER XVII.

OPINIONS OF THE REFORMERS.

Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein and how they have degenerated. But yet ask counsel of both times—of the ancient time, what is best ; and of the latter times, what is fittest. Embrace and invite helps and advices ; and do not drive away such as bring thee information as meddlers, but accept them in good part. Use the memory of thy predecessor tenderly and fairly ; for if thou dost not, it is a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone.
—LORD BACON.

IF I possess not the steady valour of a patriot, I may have been stimulated by the transient and desperate courage of a coward, to disclose so freely, in previous chapters, my view of the imperfect and distempered state of the Anglican Reformation. With this preliminary, I shall now request the reader to bear in mind, that what has been stated in this essay, under forms of suspected hostility to the Church, is, in reality, nothing new ; and no further hostile than are the remonstrances of a

friend, as opposed to the blandishments of a flatterer.

That the reprehensory complaints of a living writer are no novelty, will at once appear from the singular fact of the retention, on the part of our sister church in Scotland, of the Presbyterian rescript issued in the seventeenth century against the Church of England. It is a gross violation of that principle of pacific neutrality which ought to regulate the movements of all Protestant societies united in the essentials of the Gospel; and merits all the reprehension due to *our own* breach of inter-ecclesiastical law, in the Preface to the Prayer-book.

It is high time that both of these offensive instruments should be obliterated. Their retention tends to weaken the civil authority exercised over either church; to perpetuate feelings of rivalry and discord among the subjects of a government which allows—especially in the example of the Scotch Confession—one of its religious establishments, formally and perpetually, to degrade the other in terms such as the following: “Long and sad experience hath made it manifest, that the Liturgy used in the Church of England (notwithstanding all the pains and religious intentions of the compilers of it) hath proved an offence, not only to many of the godly at home, but also to the

Reformed churches abroad. For, not to speak of urging the reading of all the prayers, which very greatly increased the burden of it, the many unprofitable and burdensome ceremonies contained in it have occasioned much mischief, as well by disquieting the consciences of many godly ministers and people, who could not yield unto them, as by depriving them of the ordinances of God, which they might not enjoy without conforming or subscribing to those ceremonies. Sundry good Christians have been by means thereof kept from the Lord's table; and divers able and faithful ministers debarred from the exercise of their ministry (to the endangering many thousand souls, in a time of such scarcity of faithful pastors), and spoiled of their livelihood, to the undoing of them and their families. Prelates, and their faction, have laboured to raise the estimation of it to such an height, as if there were no other worship, or way of worship of God, amongst us, but only the service-book; to the great hindrance of the preaching of the word, and (in some places, especially of late) to the justling of it out as unnecessary, or, at best, as far inferior to the reading of common prayer; which was made no better than an idol by many ignorant and superstitious people, who, pleasing themselves in their presence at that service, and their lip-labour in bearing a part in it,

have thereby hardened themselves in their ignorance and carelessness of saving knowledge and true piety. In the mean time, Papists boasted that the book was a compliance with them in a great part of their service ; and so were not a little confirmed in their superstition and idolatry, expecting rather our return to them, than endeavouring the reformation of themselves : in which expectation they were of late very much encouraged, when, upon the pretended warrantableness of imposing of the former ceremonies, new ones were daily obtruded on the church*.” And this is printed and circulated, age after age, as the accredited and established opinion of a church which holds annually its General Assembly under Royal sanction !

Lest, however, any should suppose that opposition, or a less rugged form of dissatisfaction, should have emanated only from our northern relations—and domestic feuds are usually the most deadly—I will exhibit specimens of complaints uttered in the dawn and early progress of the Anglican Reformation by its own friends ; some of them being prelates, or other leading ecclesiastics, of the same period. My authority shall be the Collections of Dr. M'Crie, an historian of established and in-

* Preface to Directory.

creasing fame. Having no competent library of reference at hand, I am unable to authenticate quotations. To do this would indeed be superfluous, from the acknowledged fidelity of the biographer of Knox and Melville, combined with the variety and extent of his erudition, and of which the public has had very recent additional evidence.

It may be advisable to preface the citations by their collector's introductory remarks. He writes : " We should mistake exceedingly, if we supposed that they (the Reformers) were men of the same principles and temper with many who succeeded to their places ; or that they were satisfied with the pitch to which they had carried the Reformation of the English church, and regarded it as a paragon and perfect pattern to other churches. They were strangers to those extravagant and illiberal notions which were afterwards adopted by the fond admirers of the hierarchy and liturgy. They would have laughed at the man who would have seriously asserted, that the ceremonies constituted any part of ' the beauty of holiness,' or that the imposition of the hands of a bishop was essential to the validity of ordination : they would not have owned that person as a Protestant, who would have ventured to insinuate that where this was wanting there was no Christian ministry, no ordinances, no church, and perhaps no salva-

tion ! Many things, which their successors have applauded, they barely tolerated ; and they would have been happy if the circumstances of their time would have permitted them to introduce alterations which have since been cried down as Puritanical innovations. Strange as it may appear to some, I am not afraid of exceeding the truth when I say, that if the English Reformers (including the Protestant bishops) had been left to their own choice—if they had not been held back and retarded by a large mass of popishly affected clergy in the reign of Edward, nor restrained by the supreme civil authority on the accession of Elizabeth—they would have brought the government and worship of the Church of England nearly to the pattern of other Reformed churches. Such, in particular, was the earnest wish of his Majesty Edward VI. ; a prince who, besides his other rare qualities, had an unfeigned reverence for the word of God, and a disposition to comply with its precepts in preference to custom and established usages ; and who shewed himself uniformly inclined to give relief to his conscientious subjects, and sincerely bent on promoting the union of all the friends of the Reformed religion at home and abroad. Of his intentions on this head there remain the most unquestionable and satisfactory documents. Had his life been spared, there is every

reason to think that he would have accomplished the correction or removal of those evils in the English church, which the most steady and enlightened Protestants have lamented. Had his sister Elizabeth been of the same spirit with him, and prosecuted the plan which he laid down, the consequences would have been the most happy, both for herself and for her people, for the government and for the church. She would have united all the friends of the Reformation, who were the great support of her authority. She would have weakened the interest of the Roman Catholics, whom all her accommodating measures could not gain, nor prevent from repeatedly conspiring against her life and crown. She would have put an end to those dissensions among her Protestant subjects, which continued during the whole of her reign ; which she bequeathed as a leagacy to her successors ; and which, being fomented and exasperated by the severities employed for their suppression, at length burst forth, to the temporary overthrow of the monarchy, as well as of the hierarchy, whose exorbitancies it had patronized, and whose corruptions it had sanctioned and maintained ;—dissensions which subsist to this day, and, though softened by the partial lenitive of a toleration, have gradually alienated from the communion of that church a large proportion of

the people ; and which, if some timely and suitable remedy be not applied, may ultimately undermine the foundations of the English Establishment." These remarks, let it be observed, were first published in 1811.

Since the period of the ecclesiastical revolution in the seventeenth century, has, however, risen a perfectly new sect,—that of the Economists ; who have combined their forces with malcontents of all other classes. These partisans, like the Abbé Sieyès, have pigeon-holes full of hypothesis and speculation. They can produce, at the shortest notice, splendid theories for amateurs in change and reformation, and sordid appeals for a nation of shopkeepers. They can write about the philosophy of labour, and number among the unproductive labourers of a kingdom its religious teachers. The effect of *their* perpetual industry is not to be despised ; and, while they may equally disregard or deride all confessions and modes of discipline, they are practically Dissenters of a very formidable character, and may one day divert the revenues of the church into the exchequer of infidelity itself.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SENTIMENTS OF THE MARIAN CONFESSORS AND MARTYRS.

Of all the Marian martyrs, Bishop Ridley was the profoundest scholar; Archbishop Cranmer of the mildest and meekest temper; Bishop Hooper of the sternest and austere nature; Latimer had the plainest and simplest heart.—Oh the variety of these several instruments! Oh their joint harmony in a concert to God's glory!—FULLER.

MANY devotees to the Church of England have employed the memory of the martyrs, as they have used the argumentation of Hooker and Law—they have lived upon their affluence, in defect of actual property of their own; or, have selected as much of their credit as was immediately wanted. They have, in fact, imitated certain of old, who built and decorated the sepulchres of the prophets; but would have ill borne their doctrines, reproofs, and threatenings.

Let us bring these remarks to the test, by offering, to the present admirers of our noble army of martyrs,

Dr. M'Crie's Collection of their real opinions on ecclesiastical subjects ; and which might easily be enlarged, as any reader knows, who has looked into the annals and early writings of the Reformation.

“ Hooper, in a letter dated Feb. 8, 1560, informs Bullinger, that ‘ the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of Rochester, Ely, St. David's, Lincoln, and Bath, were sincerely bent on advancing the purity of doctrine, agreeing *in all things* with the Helvetic churches.’—Parkhurst, bishop of Norwich, in a letter to Gaultier, Feb. 4, 1573, fervently exclaims, ‘ Oh, would to God, would to God, once at last, all the English people would in good earnest propound to themselves to follow the church of Zurich as the most absolute pattern.’—Cranmer expressed his opinion formally in writing, that ‘ the bishops and priests were at one time, and were no two things, but both *one office*, in the beginning of Christ's religion.’—‘ The bishop of St. David's, my lord elect of Westminster, Dr. Cox, Dr. Redman, say that *at the beginning they were all one*.’ Thirteen bishops, with a great number of other ecclesiastics, subscribed this proposition, ‘ that in the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only deacons or ministers, and of priests or bishops.’—Cranmer says, ‘ In the New Testament, he that is appointed a

bishop or a priest needed not consecration, by the Scripture; for election or appointment thereto is sufficient.' And of the same judgment was the Bishop of St. David's.—Latimer and Hooper maintained the identity of bishops and presbyters, by Divine institution. This was also the opinion of Pilkington, bishop of Durham. Bishop Jewell assents to it, in his Answer to Harding. And on the accession of Elizabeth he expressed his hope, that 'the bishops would become pastors, labourers, and watchmen; and that the great riches of bishoprics would be diminished, and reduced to mediocrity, that, being delivered from regal and courtly pomp, they might take care of the flock of Christ.' In the same year, Dr. Aylmer addressed the Right Reverend bench in these terms: 'Come off, you bishops; away with your superfluities; yield up your thousands; be content with hundreds, as they be in other Reformed churches, where there be as great learned men as you are. Let your portion be priestlike, and not princelike. Let the Queen have the rest of your temporalities and other lands, to maintain these warres, which you procured, and your mistresse left her; and with the rest build and found schools throughout the realm; that every parish church may have his preacher, every city his superintendent, to live honestly, and not pompously; which will never be, unless your lands

be dispersed and bestowed upon many, which now feedeth and fatteth but one. I would our countryman Wycliffe's book which he wrote, *De Ecclesia*, were in print; and then should you see that your wrinches and cavillations be nothing worthy. It was my chance to happen of it in one's hand that brought it out of Bohemia.'—Cranmer expressed himself in a similar strain respecting the 'glorious titles, styles, and pomps,' which were come into the church through the working of the spirit of Diotrophes; and professed his readiness to lay them aside. In fact, the title of *bishop* was very generally disused, in common speech, during the reign of Edward VI.; and that of *superintendent* substituted in its place. And this change of language was vindicated by Ponet, bishop of Winchester, in an answer which he published to a Popish writer. It was proposed by Cranmer to erect courts, similar to the kirk-sessions and provincial synods afterwards introduced into the Scottish church. He ardently wished the suppression of *prebendaries*; 'an estate,' he said, 'which St. Paul, reckoning up the degrees and estates allowed in his time, could not find in the church of Christ.'—All the Protestant bishops and divines in the reign of Edward VI. were anxious for the introduction of ecclesiastical discipline. Dr. Cox (Oct. 5,

1552), complains bitterly of the opposition of the courtiers to this measure, and says, that, if it was not adopted, ‘the kingdom of God would be taken away from them.’ Cranmer, with his colleagues, was far from being satisfied with the purity of the last Common Prayer-book of Edward; and he had drawn up one which is said to have been ‘an hundred times more perfect.’ He and Ridley intended to procure an Act for abolishing the sacerdotal habits; ‘for they only defended their lawfulness, but not their fitness.’ When Grindal was appointed to the bishoprick of London, he ‘remained under some scruples of conscience about some things, especially the habits and certain ceremonies required to be used of such as were bishops. For the Reformed,’ says Strype, ‘generally went upon the ground, that, in order to the complete freeing of the church of Christ from the errors and corruptions of Rome, every usage and custom practised by that apostate and idolatrous church should be abolished; and that the service of God should be more simple, stript of all that show, pomp, and appearance that had been customarily and before, esteeming all that to be no better than superstitious and anti-christian.’—Horn and others had the same views and scruples. ‘By the letters,’ says Bishop Burnet, ‘of which I read the originals (in the archives

of Zurich), it appears that the bishops preserved the habits rather in compliance with the Queen's inclinations than out of any liking they had to them; so far were they from liking, that they plainly expressed their dislike of them.' Before they accepted the office they endeavoured to obtain the abrogation of the ceremonies; and when the Act enjoining them passed, they were induced to comply chiefly by their fears that Papists or Lutherans would occupy their places. Cox writes to Bullinger, 5th May 1554, 'I think all things in the church ought to be pure and simple, removed at the greatest distance from the pomps and elements of the world: but in this our church what can I do in so low a station!'—Jewell, in a letter to Martyr, calls the clerical habits 'a stage-dress, to which those alone were attached who had nothing else to recommend them to the people but a *comical dress*.' He engages that no exertions of his should be wanting to banish utterly these *ludicrous fooleries*, and *relics of the Amorites*, as his correspondent (he says) had well designated them. And, at a period still later, he writes to Bullinger, that he 'wished that the very slightest footsteps of Popery might be removed out of the church and minds of men; but the Queen would at that time suffer no change in religion.'—Grindal and Horn wrote to Zurich,

that they did not approve of, but merely *suffered*, kneeling in the Eucharist, and signing with the cross in Baptism, with some other ceremonies, hoping that they would speedily obtain their abrogation. As to Parkhurst bishop of Norwich, Pilkington of Durham, and Sands of Worcester, the Non-conformists bear testimony that these prelates discovered the greatest zeal in endeavouring to procure their abrogation. The most respectable of the clergy in the Lower House were of the same sentiments with the bishops on this subject. In the year 1562, the abrogation of the most offensive ceremonies was, after long reasoning, put to the vote in the Convocation, and carried by a majority of those present; but when the proxies were included, there was found a majority of *one* for retaining them. The arguments used by Archbishop Parker's chaplains, to prevail upon the house to agree to this, derived their chief force from their being understood to be the sentiments of the Queen.—From these facts (and a collection much more ample could easily be made), the reader will see who were the first Puritans, and how very different the sentiments of the English Reformers were from those of their successors. Those good men who had the direction of ecclesiastical affairs in the reign of Edward VI. thought it most prudent to proceed gradually and slowly in

removing the abuses and correcting the evils which had overspread the church, and to indulge the people for a season with those external forms to which they had been habituated, that they might draw them more easily from their superstitious notions and practices, and in due time perfect the Reformation to the satisfaction of all. The plan was plausible; but its issue was very different from what was intended by those who proposed it. Nor was this unforeseen by persons who wished well to the Church of England. After the bishops had resolved to rest satisfied with the Establishment which they obtained, and felt themselves disturbed by the complaints of the Puritans (as they were afterwards called), they endeavoured to engage the foreign divines on their side; and having, by partial representations, and through the respect entertained for the government of England, obtained letters from them somewhat favourable to their views, they employed these to bear down such as pleaded for a more pure reformation. Whitgift made great use of this weapon in his controversy with Cartwright. Bishop Parkhurst wrote to Gaultier, a celebrated Swiss divine, cautioning him on this head; adding, that he had refused to communicate some of Gaultier's letters to Whitgift; because, 'if any thing made for the ceremonies, he presently clapped it into his book

and printed it.' But these divines had formerly delivered their unbiassed judgment, disapproving of such temporizing measures. Cranmer having signified to the Genevan Reformer, that he 'could do nothing more profitable to the church than to write often to the King,' Calvin wrote a letter to the Archbishop in 1551, in which he lamented the procrastination used, and expressed his fears that 'a long winter would succeed to so many harvests spent in deliberations.' Peter Martyr gave it as his opinion, that 'the innumerable corruptions, infinite abuses, and immense superstition, could be reformed only by a simple recurrence to the pure fountain, and unadulterated original principles.' And the prudential advice, that as few changes as possible should be made, he called 'a device of Satan to render the regress of Popery more easy.' Gaulter, in a letter dated January 16, 1550, says, that such advices, though 'according to a carnal judgment full of modesty, and apparently conducive to the maintenance of concord,' were to be ascribed to 'the public enemy of man's salvation;' and he prophetically warns those who suffered abuses to remain and strengthen themselves in England, that 'afterwards they would scarcely be able to eradicate them by all their efforts and struggles.' Fuller says, that the English Reformers 'permitted ignorant people to retain some

fond customs, that they might remove the most dangerous and destructive superstitions ; as mothers, to get children to part with *knives*, are content to let them play with *rattles*.' Very good : but if children are suffered to play too long with rattles, they are in great danger of not parting with them all their days."

If men of equal research with Dr. M'Crie allege, that all this is an *ex parte* statement, and capable of being overthrown by citations from the self-same witnesses, they will but increase our perplexity, by shewing the hopeless difficulty, if not entire impossibility, of ascertaining the principles of the Reformers. It will appear that they also, like the Fathers of the secondary church, are writers who are ready to support every opinion of every party—the battle-elephants of the church, dangerous to all sides ; no matter by whom they are harnessed and urged to the conflict.

I can only say, that I have read, in Papal apologies, such extracts from the Fathers as would consecrate the vilest heresies of Antichrist. The Scripture is indeed open to the same treatment : for we may ask, in the language of one of Shakspeare's divines :—

In religion,
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament !

CHAPTER XIX.

LATER COMPLAINTS AND DISSATISFACTION—

EFFECTS OF MUTUAL CONCESSION.

Were love, in these the world's last doting years,
 As frequent as the want of it appears,
 The churches warm'd, they would no longer hold
 Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold;
 Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease,
 And ev'n the dipp'd and sprinkled live in peace;
 Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
 And flow in free communion with the rest;
 No learned disputants would take the field,
 Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield.

COWPER.

IF the sentiments of the earliest Reformers be dubious and contradictory, there appears to be less uncertainty in the opinions bequeathed to us by many among the most enlightened clergy of the Church of England, in various periods subsequent to its settlement by Queen Elizabeth.

It may be advisable to remind such as need the information, that two of our most eminent prelates—Archbishop Secker, and that unequalled

analogist Bishop Butler—were severally the offspring of Dissenters ; and by Dissenters were they *baptized*. They were also educated, together with Archbishop Hort, by a Nonconformist minister, whose investigation of the canon of the New Testament is the established work on its subject ; and, as such, has been republished at the Clarendon press.

Are we aware, that, in advancing objections against our ecclesiastical polity, its opponents have directed their missiles under the shadow of our own prelacy ? Many of our most learned and holy bishops and divines have, in later days, not barely owned the imperfections of their Mother, but have formally proposed reforms both of the liturgy, and of various branches of our ecclesiastical system.

Archbishop Usher not only urged a reduction of diocesan episcopacy ; but concurred with Archbishop Williams, Bishops Morton and Holdsworth, and many others in the Westminster Committee (1641), in their concessions on the doctrine, discipline, and ritual of the church. In 1689, a special commission also, under the Great Seal, empowered ten bishops and twenty divines to meet, and prepare alterations in the liturgy and canons, to be laid before the Convocation. Among the commissioners on this occasion were Tillotson, Burnet, Kidder, Patrick, and Stillingfleet—men

who were not sciolists, and innovators upon the usages of antiquity, but the *giants* of those days. Their volumes decorate the shelves of modern orthodoxy, and defy the powers of time to render them obsolete.

As to Bishop Burnet, he has recorded his disappointment at the ill success of himself and his brethren at this memorable commission. He writes: "Our worship is the perfectest composition of devotion that we find in any church, ancient or modern. Yet the corrections that were agreed to by a deputation of bishops and divines in the year 1689, would make the whole frame of our Liturgy still more perfect, as well as more unexceptionable; and will, I hope, at some time or other, be better entertained, than they were then. I am persuaded they are such as would bring in the much greater part of the Dissenters to the communion of the Church, and are in themselves desirable, though there were not a Dissenter in the nation."

The same prelate holds language yet more decided on the subject of subscription:—"The requiring subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles is a great imposition. I believe them all myself; but as those about original sin and predestination might be expressed more unexceptionably, so I think it is a better way to let such matters continue to be still the standard of doctrine, with

some few corrections, and to censure those who teach any contrary tenets, than to oblige all that serve in the church to subscribe them. The greater part subscribe without ever examining them; and others do it, because they must do it, though they can hardly satisfy their consciences about some things in them." *Non hic meus sermo est!* I only record the remarks of one familiar with the entire theology of Christendom; familiar also with the courts of princes, and with every gradation of society; and especially conversant with the men and measures of a most critical period in the history of this empire.

In times subsequent to those of Burnet, we have had the example of one prelate (Bishop Clayton) arguing, in his place in the Irish House of Peers, for the omission of the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds, and afterwards publishing his speech; besides his endeavours, at a previous period, to vitiate the then Church of Ireland by the doctrine of his Essay on Spirit. The speculations of Bishop Watson considerably tended to disorganise the frame of the Establishment. Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle, wrote a pamphlet against subscription; and when his attack was repulsed by Dr. Randolph, he was succoured by the talents of Paley. Bishop Hoadly convulsed the church by sentiments hostile to its authority and alliance

with the state; and occasioned the Bangorian controversy.

Archdeacon Blackburne raised a similar ferment by his Confessional; and defended Bishop Law's Theory of Religion, as well as the Essay on Spirit. He also assisted the clerical compilers of the Free and Candid Disquisitions on the Liturgy, which were submitted to the Convocation in 1745.

In our times, Dr. Marsh, now Bishop of Peterborough, influenced by the ill genius of German theology, brought into question the genuineness of the Book of Revelation. His hypothesis was successfully refuted by the present Dean of Lichfield; who subsequently published his elaborate works on the Apocalypse. A few years afterwards, another prelate produced his Refutation of Calvinism, and was speedily answered by one of his own clergy. It is notorious, indeed, that the subjects involved in the last-mentioned disputation are matter of perennial debate among the divines of the United Church.

Neither has diversity of opinion been confined to the sacerdotal order. A predecessor of Lords Eldon and Lyndhurst published a work intended to subvert the distinction between presbyter and bishop. The last Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, the Duke of Grafton, advocated the cause of Socinianism. But it would be endless to

enumerate similar examples both among the clergy and laity : I can only refer to such as immediately occur. They *who have read both sides*, will judge whether I am correct in stating, that there is scarcely any objection against the doctrine, ritual, and discipline of the Establishment advanced by Dissenters, but what may be found in the writings of our own prelates and divines. Let the sceptic on this point bury himself, for one short month, in an extensive library, with a mind disposed to do justice to all parties, and then report the result.

What is the doctrine of Locke's Letter on Toleration, and Bishop Taylor's Liberty of Prophecy-ing ? The question may remind any blind devotee to the hierarchy of a free country, of the alliance existing, in whatever degree, between men who think for themselves ; whether marshalled on the floor of a cathedral, presiding on the woolsack or in the senate-house, or confined within the walls of a conventicle.

But on matters of ecclesiastical polity, as on all other subjects of extended and difficult investigation, *a little learning*, or a great deal of learning if limited to the works of our own party, entangles an adventurer in many unsuspected toils. “ Qui pauca considerat, facile pronunciat ! ” Where wise men differ, they are the last persons to assume the tone of decision ; or to solace themselves with the

hope of subduing a powerful opponent. They understand also

The stern respect which warriors feel
For foemen worthy of their steel;—

and, in the event of being obliged to retire from the field, endure the defeat without those sensations of disgrace which lacerate vulgar minds in the moment of discomfiture.

The essential doctrines of Christianity form a neutral territory, where all sincere Christians meet, interchange offices of kindness, and communicate mutual support. On this vantage ground stood Robert Hall, when, in his eulogy on a late excellent clergyman, he pronounced the liturgy to be in *the very first rank of uninspired compositions*; a dictum which has been echoed and re-echoed throughout the regions of neutrality, till the borderers on both sides have startled at the sound. On this ground also the practical works of Leighton, Reynolds, Hall, Beveridge, and Horne—all prelates—are as estimable in the view of a devout Nonconformist, as the writings of Doddridge and Baxter are to a pious Churchman. The two parties here become unconscious of any line of separation between them. Why? Because all minor points of discord are absorbed in the one great inquiry, “What must we do to inherit eternal life?” There is no room here for noisy and bitter debate. The

matter becomes, as Johnson said, one of those few things which make wise men serious.

On the other hand, the nominal Churchman and the sectarian Dissenter may pursue the phantoms of controversy all their lives, and expire at last in giving utterance to the quibbles of party. In attaching themselves to opposite systems of polity, they give up no sin, and acquire none of the graces of the Christian character. Besides; with regard to the contest between Dissent and Conformity, it is in its very nature interminable. Every century, and almost every generation, witnesses the renewal of the combat, and the usual claim of victory by both belligerents. There is no umpire previously invested with powers of decision. The laws of battle ecclesiastical partake, as some think, of the glorious uncertainty of other laws.

The mention, in a preceding paragraph, of the anomalous baptism of an archbishop and bishop, may introduce us to another subject, and one of no slight embarrassment to the Anglican Episcopacy,—the employment, by the common enemy of the Protestant world, of the same weapons against our Establishment, which we sometimes brandish in our skirmishes with Dissent.

There is a church, and by far the most influential in all Christendom, which not only anathematizes separatists from the Church of England, but

regards the very mother whom they have abandoned as an alien from the new covenant ; perishing, as a branch severed from the true vine ; and even destined to be the fuel of eternal fire ! The naked language of her councils is :—“ The Church of England, called by its abettors the bulwark of the Reformation, is certainly become, from its affluence, pretensions, and intimate connection with the government of a great empire, the head of the northern schism. She affects at this time to sympathise with the pernicious heresy of the Vaudois ; thus intruding herself, as Cromwell did of old, within the enclosures of the holy Roman Catholic church. She is also extending herself to the eastern and western divisions of the globe. But let her friends beware of fondly endeavouring to steal from us the attribute of spiritual power ; or to interfere with our exclusive commission to interpret the Scripture. It was to the primal bishop of Rome, and not to the primate of England, that Jesus Christ said, ‘ Thou art Peter, and upon *this* rock will I build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ; and I will give unto *thee* the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’ It was to the pontiff of the Latin Church, and to his successors in their uninterrupted course, that Christ also declared, ‘ Behold, I am with *you* all

days, even to the consummation of the world *.' As to what is termed the United Church, it is a hierarchy borrowed, in almost all its forms and offices, from a deserted parent. Her Liturgy is culled, for the greater part, from the Missal. She boasts indeed of her apostolic succession; but let her partisans prove that their first Archbishop of Canterbury verily derived his authority by regular imposition of hands. Let them also relieve her from another embarrassment,—the circumstance of two of her subsequent prelates, Secker and Butler, having never received, even on their own shewing, canonical baptism; *therefore* never brought within the bosom of their own communion; *therefore* incapable of receiving orders; *therefore* incapable of conferring them; *therefore* guilty of having vitiated the entire system of the English episcopacy. In the mean time, the Catholic Church defies all the hostilities either of force or stratagem. She survives all the persecutions she has endured, in the land of Cranmer and of the seven bishops, and even in the boasted emporium of Bibles."

If Churchmen are driven into a corner by the explosions and fiery showers of this Papal rocket,

* Douay Translation.

Nonconformists, or I am much mistaken, must betake themselves to a similar refuge, when pressed with the inquiry, Where did *you* obtain your ministerial authority? It was, surely, derived originally from the Church of England; and it may embarrass the curious in such inquiries, if we suggest, that, as the separation of the Puritans from their mother church took place before the times of Secker and Butler, the present generation of Dissenters may boast a purer pedigree than their Episcopalian coevals! The difficulty is here stated, for the solution of others.

It may perhaps be the most prudent measure, for all parties to be silent concerning their respective claims to legitimate authority. Dr. Campbell asserts: "The ordination of our prime Scotch episcopal clergy is solely from presbyters; for it is allowed, that those men who came under the hands of Bishop Ross had been regularly admitted ministers or presbyters, in particular congregations, before the Revolution....The ordination of our Non-jurors proceeds from presbyters, in their own (that is, in the worst) sense of the word *."

If this representation be correct, the ramifications of invalid episcopacy are stretching themselves to an extraordinary extent also over the new

* Lectures on Eccles. Hist. xi.

world ; as the American bishops were, in the first instance, consecrated by their Scotch brethren—that is, by persons who had no powers of consecration.

It is yet in the recollection of many, that the prelates of both the churches exulted in privileges thus uncertain and shadowy ; and that the whole circumstance gave an impulse and reviviscence to the northern episcopacy, of which it was sufficiently conscious.

Mr. Acland, in a work on the Waldenses, writes ; “ Commenius distinctly states that the Bohemians sent three of their clergy to be consecrated by a Waldensian bishop The Moravians assert that it was by means of *this* consecration that the Apostolic succession was preserved to the Reformed Church of England.” So much for the difficulties, at once comic and serious, in which we all seem to be floundering, and with small hope of being ever extricated !

From these questions I am thankful to escape ; first begging the reader’s attention to Dr. Campbell’s statement on the actual neutrality *even now subsisting* in the several formularies of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches of Scotland, and also of the Anglican establishment, on the great question of pastoral authority. He writes : “ How different soever these churches are in the plans of

government they have adopted, and how much soever each of them is attached to its own, they equally avoid limiting the Christian ministry to one particular model. The former, in her twenty-third Article, entitled, *Of ministering in the Congregation*, says expressly, ‘ Those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.’ This, if it mean any thing, and be not a mere identical proposition—of which, I own, it has some appearance—refers us ultimately to that authority, however modelled, which satisfies the people, and is settled among them. Again, in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is of equal authority with us as the Thirty-nine Articles are of in England, chap. xxv. entitled, *Of the Church*, sect. 3 ; ‘ Unto the catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world.’ And this is all that is said on the subject. Neither has presumed to delineate the essentials of a Christian ministry, or to say any thing which could be construed to exclude those who are governed in a different manner from that in which they themselves are governed. So much

moderation has on this article been shewn by both churches. I shall add to these the doctrine of the Episcopal Reformed Church in Scotland, contained in a confession of faith ratified by law in this country in 1567 ; which, though set aside in the time of the civil wars to make room for the Westminster Confession, was re-enacted after the Restoration, and continued in force till the abolition of prelacy at the Revolution. I recur to it the rather, in order to shew how much, on this article, the sentiments of our late Non-jurors (for we have none of that description at present) differ from the sentiments of those whom they considered as their ecclesiastical predecessors, and from whom they derived their spiritual pedigree. In Article nineteenth, entitled, *Of the Notes of the true Kirk*, (I use the words of that formulary) it is affirmed, ‘ They are neither antiquity, title usurped, *lineal descence*, place appointed, nor multitude of men approving an error.’ Again, Article twenty-three, *Of the right Administration of the Sacraments*: ‘ That sacraments be rightly ministrate, we judge two things requisite : the one, that they be ministrated by lawful ministers, whom we affirm to be only they that are appointed to the preaching of the word, they being men lawfully chosen thereto by some kirk, &c. We fly the doctrine of the papistical kirk in participation of

their sacraments: 1st, Because their ministers are no ministers of Christ Jesus,' &c. Here not only is lineal descent expressly excluded, but its very channel is removed, as the Popish clergy are declared (I think with too little ceremony, and too universally) to be no ministers of Christ. Nay, all that appears externally necessary, according to them, to constitute a minister, is the choice of some congregation. Far from believing one particular form of ecclesiastic polity to be sacred and inviolable, they say, Article twenty-one, *Of General Councils, &c.*,—' Not that we think that any policy, and any order of ceremonies, can be appointed for all ages, times, and places.' "

Standing on the vantage ground of facts thus compared, I aspire to the hope that one day the United Church will be extended, strengthened, and rendered incomparably more efficient, by its alliance with other branches of the British Reformation on the basis of mutual aid and concession. It is, in itself, a most unnatural state of things, that, where a vast majority of Protestants under the same Crown doctrinally agree in general principles, and on the leading question of polity preserve a system of neutrality, we should yet continue to be a house, or an empire, divided against itself.

It is certainly practicable, and well worth the trial, to frame a solemn league and covenant—in

design and spirit very different from the one drawn up under that title in a former age—which all members of our several communions might subscribe, without in the least compromising such principles as individual persons or churches would consistently continue to hold.

In illustration of this theory let us adduce the doctrine of the Divine decrees—a subject acknowledged to be more fertile in theological estrangement and division than any other within the range of Protestant confessions. It is, then, asked, whether the upholders of the scheme of reprobation, as stated in the Scotch formularies, could not, without violation of their principles, consent to subscribe the Seventeenth Article of the Anglican Church, as the common faith of British Protestants? In this case, there would be, so far, an alliance between the southern and northern establishments.

On the other hand, might not the English clergy subscribe, with perfect consistency, the Scotch article (already quoted) on *The Church*? This would be another example of unanimity. The advantage would be, that the Presbyterian communion would remove a stumbling-block; and the sister hierarchy be provided with a definite and unobjectionable view of *the church*, in the place of existing incongruities or contradictions.

In the mean time, all questions respecting the doctrine of reprobation, as distinct from election ; and the claims of episcopacy, as also distinct from the general statement concerning the visible and invisible church ; would remain exactly where they were, and open to the discussion they might still awaken.

We have only to apply the principle on which this specimen of reciprocity is constructed, to many other points of opinion ; and it is evident, that out of the materials severally supplied by the two bodies of British theology might be formed a third, far more perfect than either, and embracing the elements of all revealed truth in a system satisfactory to every genuine Christian.

Seceders, in each division of the island, from the two Establishments, would not be backward to aid the cause of peace and charity, if thus presented to their consideration ; and, in proportion as any of them discovered a reluctance to become parties to the union, would their fellow-Christians be relieved from the co-operation of suspicious auxiliaries.

But how shall we combine our forces in respect to liturgical worship ? Before I offer any remarks on this head of inquiry, let me persuade the reader to pause, for a moment, in contemplation of the

unspeakable blessing we should possess, if we concurred only and exclusively in one national *confession*. If we could proceed no further, a higher point would be gained than the British Reformation has ever yet reached. The foundation, and first courses, would be laid for a superstructure magnificent in its dimensions and symmetrical in its design. And who would despise the day of such things?

If, in pursuing the way to national unanimity, we reformed the Prayer-book on the same basis of reciprocity, I am by no means so sanguine as to calculate upon the immediate conversion of extemporary supplicants into readers of a printed service. But the additional exhibition of a pacific and catholic spirit would produce the immeasurable good of lowering decided dislike and opposition to tolerance and neutrality, on the part of numbers who, at present, are both reasonably and unreasonably galled and fretted by existing inconsistencies and shews of hostility. Many of these might ultimately adopt the revised ritual, either partially or entirely; and, in either instance, without discontinuing the occasional practice of unpremeditated devotion.

I would undertake to re-model the Liturgy—and I say this from a conviction of the compara-

tive easiness of a task, which requires, in reality, no might of talent nor depth of research—so as *negatively* to satisfy all who sincerely admit the fundamentals of our several national creeds. Beyond this negation I would not affect to advance.

No serious Christian is *positively* satisfied with the Thirty-nine Articles as they now stand; because of their obvious omissions of much revealed truth. He may generally receive what they contain; and this is, in its degree, a negative satisfaction. But who does not perceive, that a written act of supplication might, without difficulty, be so drawn up as to be useable by every class of Christians—always excepting Socinians, and not Roman Catholics?

Much of our own liturgy is framed on this anti-sectarian model; and were it not for this circumstance, a theorist like myself would be repelled from any attempt, or hope, of rendering our service applicable to the general use of the Christian world. But the requisite materials are at hand; and the total rejection of them is the result of their combination with what is judged to be superfluous and refuse.

The ever-disputed, restless, and inflammatory question of church government, is, at the least, as difficult of arrangement as that of the liturgy. I must confess, indeed, that here I am come to a

stand. But if our alliance must at this point be dissolved, let me recur to a former suggestion: Do not give up every effort towards unity because you cannot attain all you wish; and look upon any degree of concord as a pledge of future improvement.

We may, in this view also, take a lesson from the policy of the world. In matters of a temporal nature men do what they *can*; and never avail themselves—when self-interest is at stake—of the oracular aphorism, so common in the mouths of religionists, that nothing human is perfect. They know this quite as well, and perhaps much better; but they do not *act* upon it. They are always busy in improving the various schemes of accommodation and profit connected with social life. They prefer steam navigation and rail-ways, and make these things better every year; although all the while conscious of remaining imperfection. They do not retain inferior means of conveyance, from veneration for the wisdom of their ancestors.

In making such allusions, let me not be suspected of assuming the *spiritual* superiority of the present times. No such thing: I rather incline to the darkening apprehension, that our religious movements have been retrograde. One cause of such fear may too certainly be found, not only in

the set and sullen determination of many ecclesiastics—who are no better than the monks and friars of the Protestant world—not to yield one inch ; but, it is lamentable to add, in the development of a very similar spirit among various adherents of the, so called, religious world.

Allusion has already been made to the manner in which the latter class frequently suffers itself to be duped, by men who will take their money and sweet words, and apply both donations to purposes of their own ; ill concealing the contempt such a species of generosity naturally awakens. The managers of our religious societies will do well to bear in mind the inevitable consequences of a compulsory, or politic, benevolence. We sometimes think that we conciliate, when in reality we offend ; and it may be more politic, as well as more consistent with the genius of the Gospel, to tell the world what we mean without reserve ; than to expose the entire truth to suspicion, by hesitation and imperfect disclosures.

But among our highest ecclesiastics and influential laymen are to be found men of peace, and of minds stretching far beyond the technicalities of establishments, and — what is yet more to the purpose—anxious to diffuse pure Christianity by every competent instrument, and under every regulation demanded by the exigencies of the times.

Persons of this anti-sectarian temper would be thankful to come to terms with separatists of all arms, on the basis of the common salvation ; and, in the genuine spirit of conciliation, concede all that *could* be yielded, on the extended basis in question ; if by any means they might gather together in one the now scattered and estranged members of the British Reformation.

Would the English and Irish Episcopacy desecrate itself, by licensing teachers of Wesleyan and Independent congregations as catechists ; or even by ordaining them as regular ministers, provided such persons and their flocks would accept a reformed liturgy ? Would the General Assembly of the Scotch Church violate the dignity of Presbyterianism, by allowing the southern clergy to officiate in the Kirk ?——I hear and see the inaudible and invisible emotions of surprise, derision, mistrust, and scorn, rising at these innocent inquiries. Be it so : I only wish, that things far more serious were not also ridiculed, and dogged by insult and hatred.

But the period seems to be at hand when Protestants must either unite in one confederacy against the common foe, or fall before him ; less from the enemy's artillery, than from our own mutual animosities.

There is another high road to our destruction ; and it remains to be seen by how many it will be

thronged and beaten when the hour of decision arrives — we mean, the desertion of ecclesiastics and laymen to the armies of the Papal despotism. I am not the first speculator, safely aspiring to be a prophet by calculating upon mighty effects from mighty causes, who discerns in certain anti-christian symptoms around us how readily the nominalists of the British Reformation would act as auxiliaries to the Romanists, in trying to crush the realists of the mystical church, of every communion ; united as they are under the vivific influences of their common Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Babylon has either no localities, or stretches its ramparts over every region which can supply it with an adequate number of engineers, whether veterans or recruits ; and the latter are speedily drilled and disciplined for efficient service.

In the mean time, it is due to the awful cause of God and truth to notice, in this connection, the guilty confederacy which has been recently entered into between the orthodox and Socinian bodies of Dissent. “What communion hath light with darkness ?”

Let such a combination silence the complaints of all Separatists, who declaim on the secularities of the Anglican Church. The most malignant type of worldliness is exhibited, when a believer in the Divinity and atonement of the Son of God avails

himself of Socinian influence in carrying a politico-religious question. The act is essentially suicidal. If the Romanists prevail, they will never trouble Socinians; neither will the Socinians molest them. Where both sides, whatever may be the ostensible distinctions created by *forms* of hostility, are opposed to the Gospel itself, the Dissenting professor of pure Christianity will be even *more* persecuted than his brother in the Establishment; and may, one day, be martyred amidst the triumphant shouts of a crowd of Papists, echoed by the successors of Priestley and Belsham.

That many of the religious clergy strenuously opposed the progress of the Relief Bill, is a circumstance with which I shall no further meddle, than as expressing a revived feeling of surprise and grief, that *they* touched the matter with so very slender recognition of its spiritual bearings. Much was said in speeches, pamphlets, and petitions, about the danger of the church and the constitution; little respecting the implacable enmity of the world against God, and the peril of souls being defrauded of everlasting salvation, by what these partisans supposed to be the emancipation of Antichrist.

CHAPTER XX.

CLERICAL CONFESSIONS—RECRIMINATIONS—
APOLOGIES.

A man proposes his schemes of life in a state of abstraction and disengagement, exempt from the enticements of hope, the solicitations of affection, the importunities of appetite, or the depressions of fear: and is in the same state with him that teaches upon the land the art of navigation, to whom the sea is always smooth, and the wind always prosperous.

JOHNSON.

No one, who has arrived so far in the perusal of this treatise, can be more alive than the author to the fairness and urgency of an inquiry, bearing upon the *who* and the *what* of the individual now addressing him. The chief advantage derivable from wearing the mask of an anonymous writer may be, that, as the man cannot be compared with his book, no culprit suffering under its castigations can avenge himself, by detecting the difference always more or less existing between a teacher and his doctrine.

When a lady once objected, that a certain physician's habits of self-indulgence were inconsistent with the regimen he prescribed for his patients, Dr. Johnson said, "I cannot help that, madam: that does not make his book the worse. People are influenced more by what a man says if his practice is suitable to it,—because they are block-heads. The more intellectual people are, the readier will they attend to what a man tells them: if it is just, they will follow it, be his practice what it will. Only consider: you read a book; you are convinced by it; you do not know the author. Suppose you afterwards know him, and find that he does not practise what he teaches—are you to give up your former conviction? At this rate you would be kept in a state of equilibrium, when reading every book, till you knew how the author practised. There is something noble in publishing truth, though it condemns one's-self."

It may be a novelty in the history of ecclesiastical experiments, if the present writer so far anticipates the frowns of his reader's countenance as to avoid all apology, and fly every art of evasion, by pleading guilty without further delay. Few things have more justly deserved the ridicule of mankind, than the contortions exhibited by sophists who have attempted to amalgamate veracity and disingenuousness.

I will at once concede my own inconsistency, as a minister of the Anglican Church, in continuing to receive its emoluments, perform its services, and rank among its ostensible supporters, while I have drawn up and published what, it is conceived, will be considered as the longest and heaviest indictment ever presented by a clergyman against his brethren and himself. The jury of my country will, however, judge when they have heard the cause—for I will be further inconsistent, by demanding a trial after an avowal of guilt—whether my crime does not principally consist in the act of having written *more* than others, and in having clothed with words the thoughts of a thousand bosoms.

The examples adduced in former chapters, of the discontent, disappointment, perplexity, and aspiration after reform in every branch of the Establishment, felt by numbers, from the early days of the fathers of the English Church down to more recent times—and of such illustrations I have furnished but a meagre portion—do certainly justify the present complainant, as far as any cause may be defended by great names; and by the allegation, that the accused party advances only the repetition of former remonstrances, merely dressed up in the fashion of the current age.

Now, when I reflect that every beneficed cler-

gyman affirms, with all the solemnity of a religious obligation, "I, *A. B.* do hereby declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled the Book of Common Prayer, &c. &c. &c."—a declaration including also the liturgical version of the Psalms, and the Ordination and Consecration Offices; which latter alone have created very serious doubts in the minds of many;—and, further, that every unbeneficed clergyman *uses* such liturgy; I cannot understand by what interpretation, consistent with the stern dictates of truth, we can evade the conclusion, that every syllable of the formularies so affirmed is entirely coincident with his own opinions.

This reflection awakens the painful remembrance, that never have the arts of evasion, sophistry, palliation, and management, been more notoriously developed than in attempts to explain away the strictness of subscription to the Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies. It is quite needless to exhibit here the threadbare evidence of this fact. Indeed, the very nature of the case proves the thing; from the necessary consequence of offering to an immense body of men, whose opinions are infinitely diversified, and incapable of being combined into any system beyond a few undisputed generalities, a series of formularies embracing a vast and com-

plicated variety of positions, brought together at different periods, and by collectors of discordant sentiments. The accumulation, thus provided, was certain to produce, what it has produced,—among other results, the present effort to restore the symmetry of the British Reformation.

But I would shelter the adventurer, who professes to have made this effort, under one or two examples; the weight of which may cause the scale to descend in favour of one who wants all the assistance available to his cause. The first of these shall be the late Rev. Thomas Scott, a man who was the oracle—and very deservedly so, as far as we may listen to the responses of human inspiration—of the last and present generation.

This eminent person, as every one knows, was an instance of the complete triumph of pure doctrine over heresy; and the conquest was identified with his adherence to the Church of England. From such a convert, under such a process of conversion, the very last thing we should previously have expected, would have been the expression of any doubt or dissatisfaction with regard to the religious system which he had deliberately and severely examined, and then unreservedly accepted for his private and public confession. He was not a man to retain any set of principles by a loose and careless tenure.

But what is the fact? In his Essay on Regeneration he says, "Our pious Reformers, from an undue regard to 'the Fathers,' and to the circumstances of the times, have retained a few expressions in the Liturgy, which not only are inconsistent with their other doctrine, but also tend to confuse men's minds, and mislead their judgment on this important subject." This is an unequivocal and published avowal of inconsistency in a ritual, to which he assented in all the plenitude of verbal conviction. It also touches a point of very high importance.

In relation to another subject of, at least, equal moment, we have a letter (1818) where he writes: "I have little objection to the doctrine or to the spirit of the Athanasian Creed....but, as it endeavours too particularly to explain what, after all, is incomprehensible; as many have objections to it; and as it is appointed only in the morning service, which is otherwise sufficiently long; I do not very frequently use it*." What is this, but the deliberate acknowledgment of a perpetual act of disobedience to the Church; and by one, whose continuance in that communion was once rendered doubtful, because of his objections to this very Athanasian Creed?

* Life of Scott, chap. xvii.

On another occasion, and when writing on the differences between the Establishment and other sects, he says : “ I know of no book that I can recommend as satisfactory on either side of the question. You will observe, that the assent and consent to the whole of the Prayer-book is required only of those who are instituted to benefices ; and a man may officiate as curate all his life, and never be called to make this strong and decided profession ; to which I can only be reconciled by the consideration, that it by no means is supposed to imply putting the Prayer-book on the footing of the Bible ; and by reflecting, that many things are wrong every where. But I wish it were done with. I am not prepared to say so much”—referring to his apology for the Burial Office—“ of the objections to some expressions in the Baptismal Service, or in the office of Confirmation* ;” meaning, that such expressions were less defensible.

It will not be considered, I trust, as an unfair attempt to sustain my own cause by the concessions of a man whose memory we all venerate, and whose writings and *Life* it becomes us exceedingly to value, when I add, that the above distinction—between what is severally required of incumbents

* Letters and Papers, &c. 1824. 275—278.

and curates—does, at least, border upon the slippery surface of sophistry, and seems to acknowledge, that acts of subscription and of reading are both unjustifiable, but in different degrees; that the circumstance of equalizing the claims of the Bible and Liturgy is very far from being the actual question at issue; that the wish that subscription to the Prayer-book were abolished, is an evident and formal expression of dissatisfaction, painful doubt, and earnest desire to be released from a cause of great disquietude; and that his hints about the Burial, Baptismal, and Confirmation offices are totally at variance with a decided attachment to his church.

The question still returns, How would all this hesitation, reserve, variableness of assent and consent, equivocal phraseology, and half-told diversity of opinion, be borne in the common transactions between man and man;—if, for example, and, to recur to a former illustration, the managers of a Friendly Society were to admit members, some of them as readers of its regulations, and others as subscribers, and were thence to argue on the different degrees of fidelity owed by the two parties to the institution itself? And what would be said, if one of the subscribing members were to urge, ‘My written assent to the rules by no means implies that they are to be put on the foot-

ing of the provisions by which the Bank of England is governed ; and I wish my subscription were done with ?' Would the managers felicitate themselves on this subscriber's faithfulness, and powers of analogy !

But if Mr. Scott was dissatisfied with the ritual of the Establishment, he was plainly ill at ease when contemplating its external splendour. In one of his notes to the Pilgrim's Progress his sentiments are thus developed :—" Perhaps Satan never carried a more important point, within the visible church, than when the opinion was adopted, that *the clergy were gentlemen by profession* ; and when he led them to infer from it, *that they and their families ought to live in a genteel and fashionable style*. As the body of the clergy have been mostly but slenderly provided for, when they were thus taught to imitate the appearance of the affluent, the most effectual step was taken to reduce them to abject dependence ; to convert them into parasites and flatterers ; to render them very indulgent to the vices of the rich and the great, or even to tempt them to become the instruments of accomplishing their ambitious or licentious designs : and no small part of the selfishness and artifices of the clergy, which are now made a pretext for abolishing the order, and even for re-

nouncing Christianity, have, in fact, originated from this fatal mistake."

It is impossible that so direct and positive an opinion on ecclesiastical grandeur could have proceeded, with any shew of consistency, from a decided adherent to the hierarchy. It is rather the rude bluster of a republican Nonconformist against the vestures and golden bribes of Babylon, than the mild remonstrance of a Christian minister against an imperfect system. I speak only in reference to the phraseology. Apart from this, it is, in essence, an unquestionable proof that its writer regarded the secularities of the Anglican Church as so many premiums upon clerical infidelity.

The collator of this evidence has the highest veneration for the name and the works of the excellent person implicated in the subject before us. But he remains extremely puzzled, by the opposition between these specimens of avowed doubt and dissatisfaction in relation to the Anglican creed and hierarchy, and the instrument which was presented to Mr. Scott's diocesan, after he had *read in*, on occasion of his induction to the rectory of Aston Sandford. If a confession mean any thing, it is the *decision* of theological inquiries; and the business of such as sign it is, thenceforth to en-

force, amplify, illustrate, and apply it, as the acknowledged principle of their ministry. How far was this rule observed in the above exemplification?

Let us take another instance, in the very man who was one of the second causes of Mr. Scott's conversion,—his revered friend, the Rev. John Newton; a friend, also, of all who knew him personally, and of all who have been edified by his incomparable writings: "for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

Yet this clergyman says: "I should think it no hard matter to draw up a form of sound words (whether dignified with the name of a creed or no, I care not), to which true believers of all sorts and sizes would unanimously subscribe. Suppose it ran something in the following manner:—'I believe that sin is the most hateful thing in the world: that I and all men are by nature in a state of wrath and depravity, utterly unable to sustain the penalty or to fulfil the commands of God's holy law; and that we have no sufficiency of ourselves to think a good thought. I believe that Jesus Christ is the chief among ten thousands; that he came into the world to save the chief of sinners, by making a propitiation for sin by his death, by paying a perfect obedience to the law in our behalf; and that he is now exalted on high, to give repentance

and remission of sins to all that believe ; and that he ever liveth to make intercession for us. I believe that the Holy Spirit (the gift of God through Jesus Christ), is the sure and only guide into all truth, and the common privilege of all believers ; and, under his influence, I believe the Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, and to furnish us thoroughly for every good work. I believe that love to God, and to man for God's sake, is the essence of religion, and the fulfilling of the law ; that without holiness no man shall see the Lord ; that those who, by a patient course in well-doing, seek glory, honour, and immortality, shall receive eternal life : and I believe that this reward is not of debt, but of grace, even to the praise and glory of that grace whereby He has made us accepted in the Beloved*.' ”

I cite this, not merely as myself entirely acquiescing in a statement which is evidently written with haste, and capable of being greatly improved, but as shewing the obvious difference between the private and public creeds of the Vicar of Olney. So far, indeed, was he from insisting upon the reception of the Athanasian symbol as the first step towards Christianity, that he says to his then Socinian correspondent : “ If it depended upon

* Works, i. 659.

me, I could be content that the Athanasian Creed should rest at the bottom of the sea, rather than embarrass a single person of *your* disposition*”—meaning a man of honest intentions. Again : “ I do not consider the Liturgy as faultless, nor can I subscribe to any book of human composition in the same absolute manner as I would the Bible. But, by assenting to our church ritual, I give up less of my own private judgment for the sake of peace, than I should do by espousing the rules and practices of any Dissenting churches I am acquainted with†.”—“ If allowance may be made for human infirmity in the *Liturgy*, I see not why the *Articles* may not be entitled to the same privilege‡.”—“ I act but an awkward part....being by no means myself an admirer of articles and creeds. The propriety of our national establishment, or of any other, is not what I have much to do with : I found it as it is ; nor have I influence to alter it, were I willing§.”

In this manner did the author of the *Apologia* beat his plumes against the wires of his cage ! Mr. Newton also avails himself of what appears to be an inapplicable comparison,—*that* between the Scriptures and the Prayer-book. He, further, defends himself by another comparison, and this

* Works, i. 558. † Ibid. v. 44. ‡ Ibid. i. 559. § Ibid. i. 565.

likewise unavailable. The question is not, whether we prefer the Church to Dissent; but whether we really and truly subscribe our formularies with entire sincerity. *Here* it is that the ground, which ought to support us as a rock, is always giving way, like the green surface of a morass.

By interweaving these details into what is virtually an apology for myself, I calculate—perhaps prematurely—upon bringing the purest members of the Established communion to a pause, before they condemn the defendant for offences exactly similar to those committed by the persons in question.

Will it be borne, if I mention, in this connection, that so lately as 1812 a correspondence took place, in a periodical work*, between the late Rev. Professor Jowett and the Rev. Charles Simeon; in which the latter was driven to defend the Athanasian Creed by the *ita sentiat* of the Latin copy—to which we do not subscribe, and, as clergy, are properly ignorant of its existence!

The parallel argument from the *quam longissime* of the Ninth Article appears to be equally inadmissible. It is, indeed, fully supplied by the Homilies; so that we should lose nothing by its abandonment. “The Articles,” says Selden in

* Christian Observer, vol. xi., 494, 704.

his Table-Talk, “are much another thing in Latin (in which tongue they were made) than they are translated into English. They were made at three several convocations. Of late, ministers have subscribed to all of them ; but by Act of Parliament that confirmed them, they ought only to subscribe to those which contain matters of faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments, as appears by the first subscription.” This by the way.

Did, then, the complainants whom I have cited conspire against the security of the national church? No: they wished to strengthen it, by the removal of its superfluities, and by rebuilding such portions of its walls as are out of the perpendicular. And here, also, they are not without their pupils; although, in the example immediately before us, one of them may have exceeded their instructions.

The fact is, that we are no longer left to our choice. There is a public clamour for alteration of some kind ; and if it be not made by ourselves, the hand of rude violence may destroy what internal reform would have not merely saved, but rendered more influential and permanent. The sons of violence might be disarmed, and even converted into efficient allies ; when they saw that we were acting with a disinterested and affectionate regard to *their* eternal interests.

Placed as I am in the situation of defendant, it may influence the decision of the court to be assured, that, in the course of a ministry not inconsiderable in duration, I can unreservedly declare, that I never publicly breathed out the gentlest whisper in disparagement of the Church ; while, in private, I have silenced objection by arguments which by no means satisfied myself. Discussion, indeed, on ecclesiastical difficulties with my parishioners, I have uniformly discouraged. I never solicited a Dissenter to leave his communion ; neither did I ever warn a Churchman against the perils of schism.

I am confident that the consequence of this neutrality was favourable, in the most important of all relations : men were not drawn away from the central point of Salvation, to the distant circumference of religious quarrels. The result was, to say the least, a negative blessing. The party might not reach the centre ; but his attention was not diverted from it.

If I retired, whether voluntarily or by compulsion, from the Establishment, the circumstance—if some unforeseen current of temptation did not bear me away from the principle of neutrality—would not make the least difference, so as to affect the writer's public or private conduct as an instructor of others. Under either of the supposed

circumstances, I cannot *promise* what I should do; but I know what would be the course of duty: it would run in an entirely opposite direction to that of a partisan or proselyte.

It is the glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to make its disciples citizens of the world; but in a sense which the inventors of that detestable phrase never imagined. Such disciples may claim the appellation, not from looseness, or equality, of attachment to all mankind—one of the most hateful forms of selfishness—but from finding every where a world lying in wickedness. The discovery awakens compassion, sympathy, and zeal; and a clergyman would be himself the greatest object of pity, if he forgot the miseries of mankind, and his own ability to attempt something towards their relief; if he stepped from one communion to another, only to abuse his former associates, and to suffocate his new friends with flattery.

But how seldom can we expect to find any individual of our species independent of extraneous aids! Of the definitions of man, the most accurate might seem to be, An animal delighting in party. The delight may indeed connect itself with necessity; since most men remain in their infancy, and are never strong enough to go alone. They find it indispensable to belong to some system sufficiently brilliant, in their view, to afford them a reflected

light ; and in this they glitter, and suppose themselves capable of dazzling the spectator.

An opaque ecclesiastic shines by the side of a hierarchy ; and a separatist, especially if a new recruit, in the society of his patron ; as a subaltern, who yesterday joined the Forty-second, feels his own intrepidity, when he sees on the colours and appointments of the regiment the record of its splendid achievements.

Should any one hint, that other churches, and other battalions, have also done great things, and that no religious or military institution can prevent the intrusion of ignorance and cowardice, we know what will follow,—the ignorant and the coward will shelter themselves under a greatness not their own.

The wretched reality is, that we are Churchmen, or Dissenters, first ; and our Christian pretensions are allowed to be determined afterwards—if ever.

It may be a startling question, but it is too serious to be withheld in this connection : Suppose the Gospel were proved, to-morrow, to be a fable ; what obvious and systematic difference would be observable in the conduct of the majority of the inhabitants of this country ? Let the reader who feels himself ensnared by the inquiry, draw up a list of such persons, within his district, as he satisfactorily believes to be afraid of an oath, a lie, or an

act of deliberate fraud ; and whom he would trust with the care of any of his own arrangements, if the trustee could serve himself at the cost of his principal. Worldlings who best know the world will shrink from the difficulty of this experiment. Another party might feel itself embarrassed, by furnishing the list according to the *judgment of charity*.

“ Ask yourselves often,” said Bishop Burnet, in his posthumous address to the clergy, “ would you follow the clerical course of life, if there were no no settled establishment belonging to it, and if you were to preach under the cross, and in danger of persecution. For till you arrive at that, you are yet carnal, and come into the priesthood for a piece of bread.”

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

A bigot for Independency or Presbyterianism, and a bigot for Diocesan Episcopacy and Apostolical Succession, stand upon nearly the same ground. There is little difference between the spirit of Laud, and that which *burns* in the unhallowed writings of Robinson of Cambridge, and in a late history of Dissenters. The meekness and gentleness of Christ is as far removed from the one as the other; and persecution, in one form or other, ever must result from the want of charity, when that which *letteth* is taken out of the way. I would as soon trust my liberty with the most rigid episcopalian, as with a bitter sectary; and I should not feel the more confidence in him for having "liberty" and "the rights of conscience" continually in his lips. The array of so many wise and holy men on different sides of the questions of ecclesiastical polity, whilst they were under a discussion to which nothing can now be added, ought by this time to have neutralized all parties. The spirit of true religion in churches is the principal thing; and, as that prevails, it will regulate and sanctify every form.— *Watson's Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley.* 1821.

As, in the prosecution of the most just and necessary war ever carried on, in defence of a nation's liberty against the aggressions of foreign tyranny, there will inevitably occur the evils incident to war itself;

so, in pursuing the most pacific course of controversy, with the purest intentions and to the noblest end, it is perhaps impossible to retire from the always bloody field of polemics, without some share of the disgrace and pain of defeat. It is a scene of action, where the laurels of the conqueror will too certainly look drooping and withered.

As I entered the lists, on the present occasion, expressly disclaiming, or rather leaving to others, any ascertainment of the writer's motives, I shall here take leave of the properly controversial portion of this essay, and devote the chief of the remaining pages to an effort towards something better than debate,—our personal connection, as heirs of eternity, with all national questions bearing upon the nature and effects of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So far is this design from having a remote and undefinable alliance with preceding investigations, that it is essential to the completion of my effort; convinced, as every serious thinker must be, that in proportion only to our personal, our really spiritual, acquaintance with what the Apostle calls *the deep things of God*—we must not be ashamed of an inspired phrase—will be our ability and our desire to unite in the holy enterprise of restoring the beauty and strength of the Church.

Jesus Christ came into this ruined world to

gather out of mankind a people for himself; who should enjoy his favour here, and his presence in the life to come. It is of little moment by what appellation we distinguish this people; whether elect, or faithful, or penitent, or justified, or sanctified; or by any other term which marks them out from the rest of mankind. All the expressions meet in the same centre. The elect are the faithful; and the faithful are as certainly the penitent; the penitent are the justified; and such as are justified can never be separated from such as are sanctified. Verbal distinctions are of secondary consequence, so long as we attend to the thing itself, and severely recognise the difference between the nominalists and realists of the visible church.

Christ himself had, indeed, little success, in his own immediate ministry. Few, very few, embraced his doctrine; or, if they gave it some degree of credit, they were afraid of going further. They shrank from the world's dread laugh; while they were unwilling also to part with their sins, on the one hand, and, on the other, with the flattering supports of self-righteousness. The Gospel was too hard for them, as it called for a surrender both of their pride and their lust. And so it is at this present hour.

We may thence ask, How does Jesus Christ complete the number of his elect; and how is heaven

to be filled at last ;—for filled it certainly will be, to the overthrow of all the endeavours of earth and hell, to rob the Son of God of those who will yet assemble around his throne, and partake of his eternal triumphs ! “ The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this ; ” and he will execute his certain purpose by the agency of his universal church.

In such a relation, it is unquestionably high time for all serious Christians to forget their minor differences, in one united effort to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Let us, at the present crisis, bear in mind the words of the great Head of the universal church : “ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word : *that they all may be one* ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ”

It is true, that, in every age of the church, infidels and nominal believers have been scandalized by observing the discord prevalent among such as call themselves Christians ; and objectors have frequently and eagerly brought forward this fact against the authenticity of religion itself ; as though the Gospel were responsible for the follies and crimes of such as profess it. The idolaters of Hindostan argue from this false principle, when they refuse to embrace the religion of the Europeans, on the ground that the book which Euro-

peans put into their hands is as much disobeyed by the giver as it is despised by the receiver.

Whatever degree of truth this allegation may contain, is not here the question; but one part of the Missionaries' labour has been, to convince their Heathen opponents that Christianity is not, like the schemes of Hindooism and of Mahomet, a *gregarious* religion, knowing no difference between false and genuine disciples; but a system which, in its very elements, recognises the distinction between barren opinion and practical principle; between hypocrisy and sincerity. "For the kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom; and five of them were wise, and five were foolish." And with such severe fidelity does the Church of England draw the line of separation between the two parties forming the general mass of Christians, that she warns us all that "*in the visible church the evil are ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the word and sacraments**."

If things were otherwise; if all Christians so called were Christians indeed; if they lived consistently with the spirit and power of the Gospel; what rapid and permanent conquests would their

* Article XXVI.

efforts achieve ! However, though it is undeniable that Christians, in every age, have been much estranged from each other ; and though this has lamentably contributed to harden scoffers in their derision and contempt, and to give the willing world something like an excuse for its unbelief ; yet it is quite *as* true—and I am not fastidious in repeating such encouraging assertions—that all practical believers in Christ crucified *are* united in the essential verities of the Gospel of their salvation. In this respect they are one.

They may and do differ, always have differed, and ever will differ, on subordinate matters, and even in certain modifications of doctrine ; yet are they of one heart and of one soul in that which Jesus Christ calls the one thing needful. They are perfectly agreed in a conviction of their lapsed and lost state, in consequence of the fall of the first Adam, the representative of all his posterity ; and in a renunciation of all hope of eternal life, founded on a purity and merit of their own. No shade of disagreement exists among them in respect to the efficacy of the Sacrifice offered up on the cross, by Him who *thus* opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. They are entirely united in a persuasion of the power of the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of holiness, and the Giver of spiritual life. Thus are they severally reconciled to the

Father, through the death of the Son, by the grace of the Spirit. This is *their* view of the catholic doctrine of the Trinity.

Neither is there any disunion of sentiment among them on the necessity of personal holiness ; and its certain exhibition in the heart and conduct, in proportion to the strength of an individual's faith in Jesus Christ.

Such is the unity of the mystical church, the communion of saints !—We do not ask the world, we do not expect the world, to see perfect unanimity on points of discipline and external worship ; but we do invite the world to examine and scrutinize the question, Are all sound Christians joined together in the hopes and promises, the anxieties and consolations, of religion ; in the one main point of seeking eternal life through the atonement of Christ, and by the influence of the Divine Spirit ? Other questions may be, and must be, suspended. It is only in the church triumphant that we can look for uninterrupted harmony and peace.

In the mean time, all devout persons ought firmly to unite, where they can do this without compromise of their better principles, to aid each other in advancing the cause of the common salvation, while they lament the disunion actually existing ; and to humbly anticipate the period

when the shadows of a state of imperfection, dissatisfaction, and uncertainty, shall be for ever dispersed.

As far as we are thus conscious of the powers of the world to come, we shall discover that all the interest we really take in religious concerns resolves itself into the most serious of inquiries, "What must I do to be saved?" In this manner religion becomes to the individual who presses the question, a matter of urgent, personal anxiety. He once forgot his own immediate interest in eternal things, among barren generalities. He studied, perhaps, the evidences of Christianity; assented to the general scheme of theology current in his own circle; and resented any opinion which seemed to interfere with what he supposed to be his own creed. But the whole was idle and fruitless speculation. In unequivocal terms, he was no Christian!

Of a state so wretched as this, and of a way of escape from it, a great man of our own times was conscious, when to an assembly of professed Christians he directed that memorable address:—"Of the persons in our congregations, to whom we not only may, but must, preach the doctrine of conversion plainly and directly, are those who, with the name indeed of Christians, have hitherto passed their lives without any internal religion

whatever; who have not at all thought upon the subject; who, a few easy and customary forms excepted [and which with them are mere forms], cannot truly say of themselves that they have done one action which they would not have done equally, if there had been no such thing as a God in the world; or that they have ever sacrificed any passion, any present enjoyment, or even any inclination of their minds, to the restraints and prohibitions of religion; with whom, indeed, religious motives have not weighed a feather in the scale against interest or pleasure. To these it is utterly necessary that we preach conversion. At this day we have not Jews and Gentiles to preach to; but these persons are really in as unconverted a state as any Jew or Gentile could be in our Saviour's time. They are no more Christians, as to any actual benefit of Christianity to their souls, than the most hardened Jew or the most profligate Gentile was in the age of the Gospel. As to any difference in the two cases, the difference is all against them. These must be converted, before they can be saved. The course of their thoughts must be changed, the very principles upon which they act must be changed. Considerations, which never, or which hardly ever, entered into their minds, must deeply and perpetually engage them. Views and motives, which did not influence

them at all, either as checks from doing evil, or as inducements to do good, must become the views and motives which they regularly consult, and by which they are guided: that is to say, there must be a revolution of principle; the visible conduct will follow the change; but there must be a revolution within. A change so entire, so deep, so important as this, I do allow to be a conversion; and no one, who is in the situation above described, can be saved without undergoing it; and he must necessarily both be sensible of it at the time, and remember it all his life afterward. It is too momentous an event ever to be forgot. A man might as easily forget his escape from a shipwreck. Whether it was sudden, or whether it was gradual, if it was effected [and the fruits will prove that], it was a true conversion: and every such person may justly both believe and say it himself, that he was converted at a particular assignable time. It may not be necessary to speak of his conversion, but he will always think of it, with unbounded thankfulness to the Giver of all grace, the Author of all mercies spiritual as well as temporal *."

It appears from this scheme (in which the copyist cordially concurs) that religion is a personal, in-

* Paley's Posthumous Sermons.

dividual concern. The question is not what we *think*, but what we *are*. What strange and fatal mistakes occur by resting on correct opinions, without ever inquiring whether they are matured into principles! One person adopts the Athanasian system, another rejects it; but neither of them is in advance of the other in the Christian character and life. Then, we have the sanguinary Catholic, the intolerant Churchman, the caustic Dissenter; but these also are pursuing any path except the narrow one leading to happiness. Let *us* then “take heed to the thing that is right, for that alone will bring a man peace at the last.” Time is rapidly hastening away, and the hour coming when we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Our difficulties here below are very little connected with the external divisions of the Christian church. We have something more serious to demand and retain our attention. There is a battle to be fought—with ourselves, the world, and the powers of darkness. And who is sufficient for *these* things!

The writer urges this solemn inquiry quite as much for his own sake, as in reference to others. There is not one gate into the kingdom of heaven for ministers, and another for the people. All must enter, if they enter at all, by one and the

same entrance. And "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Does the world believe this? If men's conduct be the evidence of their faith, what shall we say to the practical infidelity obvious to every observer of the times? In the dense masses of our manufacturing population, and in the comparative seclusion of our villagers, we may discover every gradation of iniquity, up to the awful point which caused the prophet to exclaim, "The overflowings of ungodliness make me afraid." With this expression of alarm every Christian patriot will sympathize; and especially when he considers how much guilt deforms and defiles his country, which he is accustomed, and most justly, to regard as the light of the world, and the glory of all lands. But the light may be extinguished, and the glory obscured.

If we are allowed to be superior, in a spiritual sense, to the rest of the Christian world, a painful inquiry arises from this very concession,—whether our superiority be proportionate to our long-possessed privileges: for where much is given, much will also be required.

Whatever gloom and fearful visions darken our ecclesiastical horizon, the United Church *may yet*

survive as long as its civil ally ; and even on the supposition that its economy, discipline, and ritual remain unaltered. But if its days be thus lengthened, the circumstance will arise from the increase and exertion of the religious clergy, as opposed to such of their brethren as take no interest in its prosperity beyond the calculations of self-love, or a dependence upon ritual observances. Had the security of the Establishment been identified with the character and claims of mercenaries, it must long since have fallen ; and great would have been its fall !

But the world had a secret and silent respect for ecclesiastics of a very different class ; and while they affected to despise such men as Richardson, Milner, Newton, Robinson, and Scott, and clergymen of their sentiments and spirit, they were all the while awed by *their* connection with the church, and felt that it was so far guarded by an impregnable defence. The very names, indeed, of these protectors excited—and excite at this hour—long and boisterous derision, at the social parties of many, whose rank, affluence, and preferment might be lost in a moment, except for the persons who are the subjects of their guilty ridicule.

In the mean time, frequently the despiser wonders, while he perishes. In the hidden depths of his own bosom he is conscious of a dark and

threatening conviction, that the men, whom he would affect to make objects of contempt, are, in reality, far above the reach of his scorn ; and that they look down upon *him*—but with feelings of compassionate sympathy. Many a despiser of this kind smiles in bitterness, during the noise of his anti-christian revelry.

Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere ;
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.

Nothing of all this is a secret to the rest of the world ; and while they unite with the revellers, both in their hatred of good men, and also in an uneasy suspicion that themselves are the victims of delusion, one thing is, in various degrees, evident,—that the safety both of the church and state is very far from being connected with the secularities of a religious establishment ; and farther still from being dependent upon ecclesiastics to whom such secularities are most important.

The second cause of our permanence and prosperity still resides in a division of the clergy, numbers of whom would be thankful to be relieved from the embarrassments which it has been a principal design of this experiment to explain. But as they are men of peace ; and as the questions which I have adventured to agitate, are, in

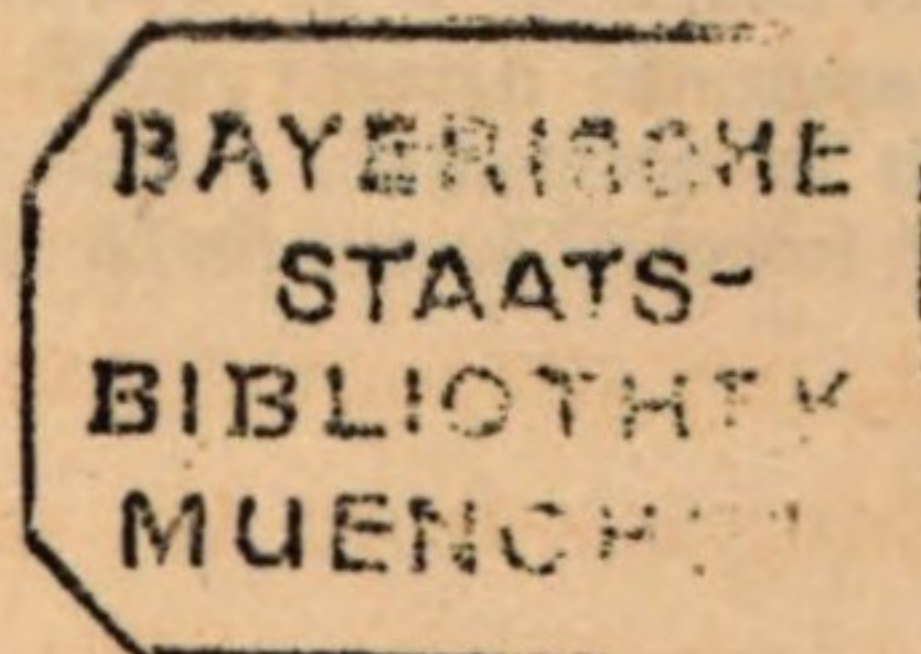
themselves, so complicated, and so completely interwoven into the texture of their domestic, professional, and spiritual lives ; and as they are afraid of plunging into darker deeps if *they* disturb the surface of what seems to be in a certain state of rest ; they pursue their noiseless way, and leave events to the disposal of the Judge of all the earth—however they may silently mourn over things which they cannot alter ; and pant after freedom from obligations, perpetually reminding them of the incompleteness and confusions of their system.

As to myself, I have already owned my own inconsistency ; and, in repeating the confession, perhaps abandon the confessor to consequences which may one day occasion him bitter regret, that he ever wandered into the endless mazes of this controversy. But, should such be the result, it will not afford the least evidence that he acted prematurely. The effect may be merely painful in a personal relation ; but otherwise, pleasant and salutary. It is, however, best to anticipate nothing.

In any event, my present conviction is, that the *Church is in danger*—from the adulation of paid and purchased advocates, from *absenters*, and from the Protestant Antichrist under all its diversified forms. Much, very much, may yet be done for its security, by a second reformation ; even if

regulated by nothing better than an adherence to common sense, and to the received maxims of human prudence. All *might* be done, if under the severe controul of Christian principle. But if the latter experiment did not succeed, we should, at least, fall with dignity. It would be a spiritual, and not a worldly sacrifice ; and when the Church was *thus* fallen, many, even of our worst enemies, might be constrained to weep over its awful ruins.

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